

KATERINA

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



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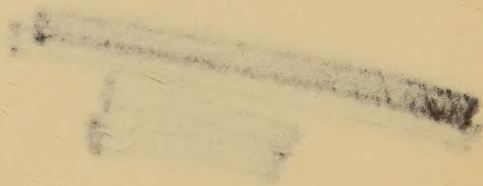
LEONID ANDREYEV

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KATERINA

K A T E R I N A

(YEKATERINA IVANOVNA)

A DRAMA IN 4 ACTS

BY

LEONID ANDREYEV

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM
THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT
WITH A PREFACE

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN



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PREFACE

KATERINA, or Yekaterina Ivanovna, was produced by the Moscow Art Theatre during the season of 1912-1913, with Germanova as Katerina, Katchalov as the husband, Voronov as Mentikov, and Moskvina as the artist. Afterward it was produced in various theatres throughout Russia. Like Andreyev's early short story, "The Abyss," this drama created a sensation. It became the topic of discussion everywhere in Russia. The critics were divided in their estimate of this play. Some praised it as a masterpiece, others denounced both the author and his work. The discussion aroused by Katerina was impassioned. Mock trials were staged in various cities where the play was presented, and Katerina was accused and denounced by some and warmly defended by others. For the most part, the men censured her, while the women defended her.

Among Andreyev's posthumous manuscripts there is the opening of a speech he had prepared for Katerina in her own defense. It reads as follows:

"... When the report reached me that they were planning to place me on trial in Moscow, I was extremely astonished. I would have laughed at it, if I

could still laugh. I thought it was impossible that I should be tried, that instead of trying those who were my murderers, they try me whom they practically killed. I thought it was impossible that I, the real accuser, who demand a trial, vengeance and punishment for my cowardly hangmen, should be placed on the bench of the accused, that I should be declared insane and in the end pardoned merely out of pity.

“Has the human conscience been blunted to such an extent, or are conceptions of justice, of good and evil, so confused, that the innocent victim is on trial, while the murderers and hangmen are pitied, praised and permitted to remain undisturbed in their comfortable homes? That seemed impossible!

“But that which I could not conceive possible has happened—I was placed on trial. It is not so important that I was acquitted after long deliberation and hesitation, and that I was not punished. That was only a condescending tribute to my feminine weakness, but it is significant that my acts and my general conduct were regarded as immoral, that witnesses and experts were cross-examined, that the prosecutor and counsel for the defense made speeches about me. It is significant that I was seated upon the disgraceful bench of the accused—*that I was on trial . . .*”

In one of his unpublished letters to the Director of the Moscow Art Theatre, Andreyev analyzed the char-

acter of Katerina, as portrayed in one of his most favorite dramas, as follows:

“And now a few words about my dearest Katerina.

“She is least of all invented by me. I have known such a woman very intimately—with these strange movements of the hands, with this modernism, and seeming inconsistency. I did not like her at all until I learned to know her, until I discovered that her mannerisms were not suggested by the decadents, but were genuine and natural with her. She was, as I afterward realized, a *dancing* woman, under the spell of a certain inner rhythm. Undoubtedly, time taught her the character of the dance, and she was at all times a *dancing* woman, and she alone heard the inner rhythm.

“With regard to the dramatic in Katerina, it is my idea that the very beginning of the drama lies in this fact: She had come to *dance* in life where others did not dance. Instead of dancing, they jostled and elbowed one another. That is why she seemingly broke down so quickly, so easily and so strangely. Those who elbow one another and march ahead can endure more easily the jostling on their way. They rest on the whole foot, not merely on their toes, while the dancer falls.

“The misfortune of Katerina lies in the fact that she did not fall at once. Then it would have been easier for her to rise. But she lost her rhythm and she commenced to whirl about ever more rapidly. Hoffman

has a story about two queer individuals who contrived an automatic dancer. The automatic dancer made an enormous success at a ball. While the queer fellows went off for an hour to a neighbouring saloon, the automaton somehow got out of order. All were terrified while the automaton continued to dance, whirling an unconscious girl in his arms and repeating automatically: 'How beautiful you are!' Something of this kind has happened to Katerina."

Commenting on the interpretation of Katerina on the stage, Andreyev wrote:

"Katerina was good throughout, but she should be still better in the fourth act. Above all, she must subdue the sensual and must intensify her suffering and her *revolt*. She is not dead, and her call for the prophet must be almost a stern accusation against all about her. I have read in the newspapers that women were hissing during the production of Katerina. There must be something wrong about this. It is the men who probably hissed, for Katerina *strikes them*. It is as though people had removed the garments from Jesus after the crucifixion, and were dividing them among themselves, laughing, cursing, paying no heed to the dead, when suddenly Jesus opens his eyes and stares at them. It is necessary to reproduce this look of Jesus—then even the blind will understand that Katerina is not dead. Then, too, the passive attitude of the husband will seem lofty instead of contemptible."

PREFACE

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In "Katerina" Andreyev depicted the downfall of a pure woman as a result of her husband's unfounded suspicions, just as in "The Waltz of the Dogs" he pictured the breakdown of a strong man who was rejected by the woman he loved.

HERMAN BERNSTEIN

New York, September, 1923.

CHARACTERS:

GEORG STIBELEV

KATERINA IVANOVNA, *his wife.*

ALEXEY, *his brother.*

VERA IGNATYEVNA, *his mother.*

TATYANA ANDREYEVNA.

LIZA, *her daughter.*

PAUL KOROMISLOV, *an artist.*

ARCADY MENTIKOV.

FOMIN, *a student.*

JACOB TEPLOVSKY, *a pianist.*

TOROPETS } *artists.*

LUDWIG }

ZHURA, *a nephew of Koromislov.*

GOVERNESS } *at Stibelev's*

MAID }

MAID, *at Koromislov's*

KATERINA

KATERINA

ACT ONE

It is near one o'clock in the morning.

The large dining room shows traces of disorder. No one is in the room. Only one electric bulb is lighted in the lamp over the table, which gives the feeling of unpleasant discord. At first it looks as though everybody is already asleep in the house, but soon voices are heard. One of the doors is slightly open, and through the opening comes a bright light. Behind that door a man and a woman are talking loudly and excitedly. The voices are now raised to the point of cries, now they are lowered. There are brief pauses, and once the words "You lie!" are uttered by an angry masculine voice.

During the pauses the ticking of the clock is heard. The door on the left opens, and a tall, clean shaven, long-necked student appears in the doorway; he carries a small tray with two empty tea glasses. Apologizing, he says something to someone behind him in the other room, and then closes the door. He walks cautiously, so as to make no noise, puts the tray on the table, and

stretching his neck, listens attentively to the voices outside which now resume their heated quarrel. Then he returns just as cautiously and as noiselessly and shuts the door behind him tightly. The voices grow louder.

MAN

And I am telling you—

WOMAN

Don't you dare! That's mean!

MAN

Keep quiet! You lie! You are a woman of the streets—

WOMAN

How can you say that, George? Don't touch me! Don't, don't—

[*These words are followed by a moment of silence—and then two shots are fired. Suddenly the room is lighted.—Noise, excitement, people run around in confusion. KATERINA, partly dressed, comes out of the room where the shooting took place, and runs through the dining room, crying; she is followed by a tall man, without a coat, who stumbles in the doorway, and then fires at her once more; broken dishes fall from the closet at the wall.*]

The man who fired the shots is seized by the student who came running into the dining room. The student struggles with him and takes the revolver away from him. Behind them stands another student, evidently a stranger in the house, who does not know what to do.]

GEORGE

Leave me alone! I'll kill her! She—

ALEXEY

Let me have the revolver!

GEORGE

Stop, you are choking me. [*He drops the revolver on the floor.*]

ALEXEY

Fomin, take it away. Take the revolver. The devil! But you are strong, Gorka. I didn't know you were so strong. Sit down!

[*He seats him down in a chair. FOMIN, clumsy and embarrassed, picks up the revolver and puts it into his pocket.*]

GEORGE

I have wounded her.

ALEXEY

No. She is safe.

GEORGE

The second shot hit her.

ALEXEY

No, she is safe, she has fled. My God, what is going on here? We must find out how she is. Fomin, go and find out.

FOMIN

I don't know where to go.

ALEXEY

Go through that door,—yes,—there. The devil! A comrade of mine visits me for the first time, and this happens— Eh, Gorya, Gorya, what does all this mean? Do you want some water? Your hands are trembling. How could you do such a thing?

GEORGE

Leave me alone!

ALEXEY

Gorya, what has happened?

GEORGE

She has deceived me.

ALEXEY

You lie!

GEORGE

How mean, how mean, my God! Ah, Aleyosha, what is going on in the world? Just think of it: Our Katya, our pure Katya—you also loved her—you did, didn't you? Tell me!

ALEXEY

I still love her! And don't—What do you want, where are you going?

[*A maid, partly dressed, appears in the doorway.*]

MAID

I—I thought—

ALEXEY

Go! Poking her nose here!

GEORGE

Don't let anybody come in.

ALEXEY

No, no. What did you say?

GEORGE

Nothing. She deceived me!

ALEXEY

Of course. I loved her and I still love her. I will not believe it until I—

GEORGE

I am telling it to you myself— Or do you think I would suddenly fire at her without any cause? I?

ALEXEY

Go on. Sit down, sit here, I believe you. Why is he so slow?

GEORGE

Who?

ALEXEY

Fomin.

GEORGE

Is she wounded?

ALEXEY

I don't know. Fomin will be back soon— What do you want, water?

GEORGE

Yes.

ALEXEY

Here—drink— How your hands tremble!

GEORGE

Just think of it—the woman has two children!

ALEXEY

Very well— [FOMIN *appears.*] Ah, Fomin, at last—well, what is it? Where did you get lost?

FOMIN

Never mind. I couldn't find my way. I went into one door—

ALEXEY

Well, what is it? Nothing? The devil! Is she wounded?

FOMIN

No, no, not at all.

ALEXEY

Thank God! [GEORGE *laughs loudly.*]

FOMIN

There is an elderly woman with her— Here she is!
[*A tall stout woman, also partly dressed, enters quickly, crying loudly.*]

VERA

Gorya dear, what is it, my darling, Gorya! Suddenly—at night—I hear shooting— What have I lived to see, my God! At night—I hear—shooting—

GEORGE

[*Impatiently and harshly*]: Oh, mother! Well, at night, shooting, what of it? Mother, you never say the right thing—

ALEXEY

Keep quiet, Gorya. Don't cry, mother, calm yourself, all's well.

VERA

[*Crying*]: She is wounded, isn't she?

ALEXEY

No, he missed her. He missed her!

GEORGE

[*Laughing*]: Missed her!

VERA

[*Crying*]: You should have thought of the children at least. Two children.

GEORGE

Mother!

VERA

What will happen now? A member of parliament, everybody so proud of you, and now you'll be on trial like any ordinary criminal.

ALEXEY

Nothing will happen, mother, nobody will know about it.

VERA

What do you mean nobody will know—and the servants? You just see what is going on in the kitchen now. They are afraid to come in here. Sasha wanted to run for the janitor, but I didn't let her. "Where are you running, you fool?" I said to her, "you only imagine it!" I am going back to the country tomorrow, to father—tomorrow! I have always told you she was a bad woman—

GEORGE

Keep quiet, you have no right—

VERA

Is it better to shoot? If you had only heeded me, Gorya, there would have been no need for shooting—

ALEXEY

You don't know her, mother. Quiet!

FOMIN

[*Softly*]: Alexey, perhaps I ought to go?

ALEXEY

[*Loudly*]: Oh, no—since you happen to be a witness, you may as well stay. Really, stay a while, Fomin, otherwise it is so— Gorya, do you want some wine?

GEORGE

No.

ALEXEY

Dress yourself, you are shivering. Shall I bring your coat? I'll get it for you.

GEORGE

No. What is she doing?

ALEXEY

I'll find out in a moment.

GEORGE

Tell her to leave immediately. Immediately, do you hear?

ALEXEY

Yes, yes, I'll tell her. I don't think she'd stay here after this. You wait here, I'll be back soon.

GEORGE

Give her some money.

ALEXEY

Why money?

GEORGE

I tell you, give her some money! And let her go immediately Alexey!

ALEXEY

[*Turning back in the doorway*]: What is it?

GEORGE

Let her go immediately!

ALEXEY

Very well! I don't think she'd stay here anyway.
[*Exit.*]

VERA

[To FOMIN]: Be seated young man. What is your name?

FOMIN

Fomin. I am a friend of your son's.

VERA

To become acquainted under such circumstances! Be seated. What time is it now?

FOMIN

Ten minutes of one. Your clock is five minutes slow.

VE

O God! The whole night is still ahead of us, and I thought— Gorya dear, put something on, you are cold.

GEORGE

[*Pacing up and down the room*]: No!

VERA

Did you break that plate? Gorya, my unfortunate son, what are we going to do now? [*Cries.*]

GEORGE

I don't know, mother,—we'll manage it in some way or other.

VERA

Gorya, don't let her take the children! She will demoralize them.

GEORGE

I have no children. I have nothing.

VERA

What do you mean, nothing? And God? [GEORGE laughs without answering.]

You should be ashamed of yourself, Gorya!

FOMIN

[*Irresolutely*]: Perhaps I am not wanted here? Besides, it is time for me to go.

GEORGE

Stay. [*Contemptuously and harshly.*] Young man, can't you understand that there are no strangers here just now? It's laughable—only a little while ago a human being was almost killed, death is still lurking in the corner, and yet he thinks he's a stranger here—superfluous! When all is well, he is not superfluous, but now when he is needed, when something has happened— How absurd!

VERA

Don't be excited, Gorya, the young man will stay. Stay here, young man, or we'll be afraid.

FOMIN

I'll stay with pleasure.

GEORGE

Instead of running away and hiding, you had better watch carefully and consider what is happening. You are still young, this may be useful to you. Mother, do I hear the children crying?

VERA

No, I don't hear them crying. But it may be that they are crying. [*Weeping.*]

GEORGE

Yes, let them cry. Just look, it is night. Do you understand, night? And this house, a fine house— See, how luxurious! And there the children are crying—

VERA

Did she confess to you?

GEORGE

Yes. Almost. Don't interrupt me, mother. Just think of it— You know me?

FOMIN

Of course! I have even heard you speak in parliament.

VERA

You had better put on a coat, Gorya.

GEORGE

No. Just think of it— What must a man like me live through and experience in order to take a revolver and— Yes, what was I saying? Oh yes: I said—it is night. The night is here— [*Strikes himself on the forehead.*] Do you understand? The night is here! But what are they doing there with the children—are they beating them? That's impossible!

[*The door opens quickly and KATERINA, GEORGE's wife, appears in the doorway. Behind her, ALEXEY is unsuccessfully trying to hold her.*]

KATERINA

I am going,—do you hear,—I am leaving! But you are a scoundrel, yes, yes, you intended to kill me—

GEORGE

[*Wildly*]: Take her away! Or— Get out!

ALEXEY

Katya!

KATERINA

You wanted to kill me! [*Covers her eyes with her hands and throws her head back, as though about to fall.*]

ALEXEY

You'd better go, Katya. Have you lost your mind?

KATERINA

[*Turning to him*]: Alexey, Alexey, he wanted to kill me— Only God—God saved me—for the sake of the children.

[*She goes out breaking into a sob; ALEXEY shields her as she goes out.*]

GEORGE

[*Advancing a step towards the door*]: Go! I—I will show you who your God is!

VERA

[*Horrified*]: Gorya!

FOMIN

Listen—

GEORGE

I will show you who your God is!

FOMIN

Listen—

VERA

Gorya! Have pity on me, Gorya. I can't bear it, I am going to— Give me some water, water!

FOMIN

Listen, please don't, listen—

GEORGE

Very well, very well— Give her some water.

[VERA IGNATYEVNA *drinks water half-hysterically.*

Enter ALEXEY, glancing quickly at his mother, then at his brother.]

ALEXEY

So! What is it, mother?

VERA

Nothing—I— I feel better now. Gorya, Gorya.

GEORGE

Why did you let her in here? Didn't you have strength enough to keep her out?

ALEXEY

[*Sternly*]: No. She's gone out of her mind completely.

GEORGE

What are the children crying about?

ALEXEY

Because they are being dressed. You are a poor shot, brother.

GEORGE

Hm! Do you think it would have been better if I had killed her?

ALEXEY

Perhaps.

GEORGE

You know I can't shoot. I am not a sportsman.

ALEXEY

If you are not a sportsman and you can't shoot, you shouldn't have done it.

GEORGE

Alexey!

ALEXEY

Well, don't be angry. I am somewhat out of my mind myself. One can't help getting that way with you here.

GEORGE

That is the opinion of a sportsman. You are devoting too much time to your exercises, to boxing; and your views—pardon me—smell too much of the arena. In my days students—

ALEXEY

True, Gorya, true, I am a sportsman and I talk nonsense. Forgive me, and don't be angry. Give me your hand; very well then. I'll fetch your coat in a moment— Where is it, in the library?

GEORGE

Yes. But I don't need it.

ALEXEY

You do need it. Whatever you may say, a coat adds dignity, and a man without a coat—

[Goes out to the library.]

GEORGE

Alexey!

VERA

He loves you dearly, Gorya, he is purposely jesting in order to calm you. You'd better have some wine, Gorya.

GEORGE

Give me some wine.

[VERA rises, in order to get some wine from the buffet.]

ALEXEY enters with GEORGE'S coat on his arm; from another door enters the French governess, —coquettish, arrogant-looking, with curled hair.]

GOVERNESS

Madam asked me to say—

ALEXEY

Put it on, Gorya. [*To the governess*]: What did Katerina Ivanovna ask you to say?

GOVERNESS

Madam asked me to say to Mr. Stibeleff that she is taking his fur coat for Katya as it is very cold outside.

GEORGE

Please, please.

GOVERNESS

The fur coat will be sent back tomorrow.

ALEXEY

Tell her it's all right. Is there anything else you wish?

GOVERNESS

I? No, nothing.

[*Exit, looking fixedly at GEORGE. Pause.*]

GEORGE

Listen, mother, I know it is unpleasant for you—

But please go and see what the children are doing, see how they are dressing them—and so on. But please, mother, don't say a word—to Katerina. It's enough!

VERA

What can I say to her? What I had to tell her, I have already told her. What's there to say now? But how about you here? Alexey, you'd better stay here, don't leave him.

ALEXEY

Very well, mother. Go. Let us have some wine. Fomin, don't you want any?

FOMIN

No, Stibeleff, thank you. [*Exit VERA.*]

ALEXEY

Gorya, won't you come to the library with me for a minute?

GEORGE

To the library? No, I don't want to go there.

ALEXEY

Well, then— Fomin, go to my room for a little while, have a smoke. I'll call you.

GEORGE

Perhaps your friend wants to go home?

FOMIN

No. I'll stay with pleasure. It's early yet. [*Exit.*]

GEORGE

This friend of yours is quite a blockhead.

ALEXEY

No. He simply does not know what to do, out of delicacy. Judge for yourself, the situation is, indeed, very awkward. Gorya, what have you done?

GEORGE

You've seen for yourself.

ALEXEY

Where did you get the revolver? I thought at first that you used mine.

GEORGE

No. I bought it the day before yesterday.

ALEXEY

You bought it? So this was premeditated?

GEORGE

Evidently. How terrible it is to dress the children in the middle of the night, to take them away—the children are crying. Katya in my fur coat— Eh, but what difference does it make now? There's my life, Alexey,—there's life. How sad it is!

ALEXEY

Don't be angry at me, Gorya, but—are you sure that— Of course, if there are facts, then— But I can't imagine that Katerina, that Katya—

GEORGE

Could I have imagined it? But the facts, the facts!

ALEXEY

[*Incredulously*]: Of course, if you have the facts— No, no, I don't say anything, I am only astonished. You have lived with her five years—

GEORGE

Almost six—

ALEXEY

Almost six—and there was nothing wrong before? And Katya—you yourself named her “Touch me not,” and all of us thought so too— Besides, she does not look like the women who deceive their husbands!

GEORGE

Call her Katerina. [*Pause.*]

What was she doing there? You say she has gone out of her mind?

ALEXEY

She was packing her things when I came in.

GEORGE

Was she very much frightened?

ALEXEY

Yes, I think so. Perhaps it is painful for you to talk about this just now? Then let us talk about something else.

GEORGE

Let us talk about something else. But how fortunate after all that I didn't hit her! Is it possible that it could have happened—the bullet could have killed her. Kill? What a strange word. Yes, I fired. Three times, I believe. Yes, three times.

ALEXEY

You broke the vase in the library.

GEORGE

And the second bullet?

ALEXEY

I don't know.

GEORGE

We must look around. The third one is here—Alexey?

ALEXEY

Well?

GEORGE

Does this seem wild to you? What are you thinking about?

ALEXEY

I am still thinking about your being such a poor shot. Listen, Gorya, if it isn't painful to you to talk about it— I can't conceive— Who is he—that man? [*Pause.*] Koromislov?

GEORGE

Why Koromislov? [*Suspiciously*]: Why Koromislov? Have you any reasons? Why Koromislov?

ALEXEY

What reasons? I am simply asking you.

GEORGE

But you said Koromislov.

ALEXEY

The devil! I have gone over in my mind everybody I know and he is the most interesting. He is an artist and a handsome man. Katya visited him frequently, and he looks as though he were the kind of man— Well, are you satisfied? These are my reasons.

GEORGE

No, you are out of your mind. Koromislov! Paul is my friend, a real friend, my only sincere friend and— It's Mentikov, yes, yes, don't look so surprised. It's Mentikov!

ALEXEY

Hold on, I don't look surprised— Which Mentikov? Arcady Mentikov?

GEORGE

Why do you shout? Yes, the same Mentikov, there is no other and— Please, Alexey, stop. He has been coming to the house every day, and you repeat his name as if you heard it for the first time in your life. What's this comedy!

ALEXEY

That nonentity? [*Stretches out his hands.*] Well, Gorya, of course you are now agitated, but I was of a higher opinion about— Well, don't be angry,

brother— I thought much more of your mental capacity.

GEORGE

Did you?

ALEXEY

Yes. To fire at a woman and miss killing her, by accident— What for? After all it was well that you didn't know how to shoot. You are my older brother and I owe you a great deal, but I must tell you frankly—people like you should not be permitted to handle firearms. Good-by!

GEORGE

Oh, Alexey!

ALEXEY

Yes. Good-by!

GEORGE

Where are you going?

ALEXEY

To Katya.

GEORGE

My dear boy! You have the muscles of an athlete—you are getting to be a strong, firm, and handsome—

yes, yes, a handsome man, but you are only twenty-two—

ALEXEY

Twenty-three.

GEORGE

Twenty-three years old, and you don't understand anything! You think that in life only the strong are terrible and dangerous—no, my dear, the strong are terrible only to the weak and the insignificant. But to us, to the strong, to people like you and me, the insignificant are more terrible. How can Paul Koromislov take away from me a woman—my wife, if I am stronger than Koromislov, if I also have talents of my own, if I am just as sensible as he, and if our methods of struggle are the same? But a nonentity whom you don't fear, whom you don't even notice, because he crawls below your level, a nonentity who has his own petty appetites, his own petty desires, who cannot be offended by anything, who gets in and accepts all sorts of insults, blinking his little eyes pathetically, and finally in one of those moments when a woman—

ALEXEY

I can't bear to listen to this!

GEORGE

Such a nonentity is especially attractive to a woman because she does not regard it a sin. Is he a man? He simply crawls over in the dark and— Afterwards they can drive him out, they can forget him absolutely, as only women can forget, forget so that they grow indignant if anybody dares remind them. “How? I? With him?” True, it happens that children are born of such nonentities— Is there no cognac in the house? This is water, not wine. Let me have some cognac, quick!

[ALEXEY *looks for cognac in the buffet.*]

GEORGE

I am dreadfully sleepy now.

ALEXEY

It's the reaction.

GEORGE

Already? No, it is too soon for a reaction to set in. Well?

ALEXEY

There's no cognac here, Gorya. But I can get it, if you like, I can send Fomin to get it.

GEORGE

No, it isn't necessary. Did you notice that lately Katerina was always in that man's company?

ALEXEY

He was forever running errands for you, too.

GEORGE

[*Laughing*]: Yes, yes. That's where the horror lies—he is extremely obliging and even kind—even kind. He is always at hand, and it is pleasant because one can always laugh at him and joke at his expense. But I can't talk about it now.

ALEXEY

Aren't you feeling well?

GEORGE

To be brief, she had an appointment with him, at his hotel. She says that she went there to thrash him, and that she did! You see, he has been annoying her for two years, he has been imploring her, writing letters—

ALEXEY

Why couldn't she write him? Or why didn't she tell you about it?

GEORGE

Why? You see, she did write him and she did tell him! But he didn't believe her.

ALEXEY

She could have given him a thrashing here, at home.

GEORGE

Do you think so? You see, and yet she went to his hotel and stayed there for two hours. . . . Yes, yes. Don't be surprised at this preciseness, two hours and several minutes. I was outside.

ALEXEY

An anonymous letter?

GEORGE

Yes. Is there no cognac?

ALEXEY

I told you there is none. I wouldn't have followed her.

GEORGE

Do you think I attached significance to that—visit? Not the slightest, and believe me, Alexey, it was laughable to me. I thought I would have some fun with her. I was smiling all the time, smiling. [*Laughs.*] After all, we've been married six years! True, during the

past year I have seen but little of her. I am busy, I am a public man, I am weighed down with work! And I couldn't watch every step of hers—

ALEXEY

Of course.

GEORGE

I have so much work of my own! I knew that all was well and that the children were well—and then! In the evening, later in the evening, I asked her with an obvious purpose, I smiled like an idiot—I asked her, “Why—why are your eyes so languid?” “Are they?” she asked. I kept smiling, and asked, “Where were you this morning?” And—

ALEXEY

Well?

GEORGE

She lied. I didn't say anything, but how I felt that evening! That mean smile clung to me—it was a sly smile, Alexey—and I could not drive it away under any circumstances. I was lying on my couch and crying—and at the same time—I kept smiling.

[Goes off to the corner of the room, remains there for some time, with his face to the wall.]

ALEXEY

Gorya!

GEORGE

[*Without turning*]: If you hadn't torn the revolver out of my hands this evening— Don't say anything! I'll be all right in a minute.

ALEXEY

Gorya! I'll telephone Koromislov, let him come over.

GEORGE

Paul? Telephone him. Tonight she lied again in the beginning—and towards the end, too. Call Paul, yes—and— Never mind, tell him that I need him—that it is very urgent.

ALEXEY

I'll do it at once, but the question is whether he is at home.

[*Exit ALEXEY to the library. GEORGE remains alone.*

He paces the room, his face expressing sorrow.

Enter VERA IGNATYEVNA.]

VERA

Gorya, go out and kiss the children. Little Katie is calling you, she is crying.

GEORGE

And she?

VERA

She left, she went away with Sasha first. The children will go with the governess.

GEORGE

She left?

VERA

Yes, with Dementyev. Go, Gorya, the children are waiting for you.

GEORGE

No, I don't feel like going.

VERA

Katie is crying.

GEORGE

No. Let them go.

VERA

Give them your blessing, Gorya, or they'll be unhappy.

[GEORGE, *crying, kneels before his mother, hiding his face in her lap.*]

GEORGE

Mother, dearest, how am I going to live? How am I going to live now. I'll kill myself!

VERA

[*Crying, strokes his hair*]: My son, Gorya, my dear boy, don't, my dear boy—I am with you, Gorya—
[ALEXEY appears in the doorway, but the mother motions to him to go away, and he leaves.]

GEORGE

I am afraid!—I am going to kill myself.

VERA

What for, Gorya? Don't, my dear boy. You are a dear son to me, your country is proud of you, you are such a splendid man. Only dishonest people kill themselves, people who have lost their honor, but you are not to blame for anything—

[*The governess appears in the doorway, but VERA motions her to leave, and she disappears.*]

You are so good, everybody loves you. God is your protector— He stopped you from killing a human being— Wait, Gorya, we must escort the children.

GEORGE

[*Rising*]: Kiss them, mother, I cannot.

VERA

Very well, then, you'll kiss them some other time. They are warmly dressed, they'll get there safely.

[*Calls*] Alexey! Alexey! [*Enter FOMIN.*]

VERA

Oh, God, who is this? Ah, you, young man, and I thought you had already gone.

FOMIN

I don't know. It seemed to me, but I am—

VERA

Never mind, never mind, no exercises are necessary now. Alexey!

[*Enter ALEXEY, speaking in a feigned cheerful tone of voice.*]

ALEXEY

He'll be here soon!

VERA

[*In the doorway*]: Who'll be here?

ALEXEY

Paul. I telephoned to him, he had just come home. A remarkable man. When he heard it was necessary

to stay up, he expressed extreme joy! [*To FOMIN.*]
Fomin, there's a man who hates sleep!

GEORGE

Did you tell him?

ALEXEY

Yes, a little. Fomin, brace up, what the deuce? Do you want a cigarette, Gorya? [*GEORGE takes a cigarette silently.*]

FOMIN

I can get along without sleeping a night or two—it makes no difference to me. But you understand that my position—I simply feel embarrassed.

GEORGE

There's nothing to embarrass you, colleague. Are you studying law?

FOMIN

Yes.

GEORGE

There's nothing to embarrass you, colleague. Alexey, do you know? The wine is strong. I feel as though I am somewhat intoxicated, my head is reeling and I seem to see all sorts of things. Were there clocks

in Boris Godunov's time? A foolish question, but don't be surprised: I am looking at the dial and it seems peculiar tonight—it is alive and it stares at me. Oh, my nerves! Have you any nerves, colleague?

FOMIN

[*Smiling*]: How shall I say? Thus far I have had no occasion to test myself, but I think I have nerves like everybody else.

ALEXEY

Gorya, he's a sportsman like me.

GEORGE

Exercising?

ALEXEY

He fences and boxes and skiis. We were discussing today an outing on skiis— Eh, Gorya, why shouldn't you join us?

GEORGE

I'm too old.

ALEXEY

Nonsense. If you only breathed the cold air properly, your mind would brighten up to such an extent— isn't that true, Fomin?

GEORGE

I'm too old. Alexey, go and see whether the children have gone away.

ALEXEY

I will, Gorya.

[*Exit ALEXEY. Awkward pause.*]

GEORGE

Can you shoot, too?

FOMIN

No.

GEORGE

One should know how to shoot. An unsuccessful shot—even at yourself, even at a friend or at your sweetheart, leaves you with a sense of disgrace.

FOMIN

I don't understand that. Why a sense of disgrace? It isn't always good to kill a human being. And as I have heard, many suicides who remain alive afterward thank their fate because they were poor shots.

GEORGE

Really? I don't understand that either. But there is a sense of shame, colleague,—shame, that's a fact.

FOMIN

Perhaps it isn't necessary to shoot at all?

GEORGE

Why do they make revolvers in that case? [*Both laugh.*]

FOMIN

You'd better say that in Parliament.
[*Enter ALEXEY.*]

ALEXEY

I put mother in bed, she could hardly stand up. I promised her that I will guard you, Gorya. But see that you justify my confidence.

GEORGE

Have they gone away?

ALEXEY

Yes.

GEORGE

Is the nursery empty?

ALEXEY

Of course, it's empty. Fomin, the day after tomorrow, then, we go skiing—

GEORGE

Empty? What does it mean, Alexey,—is the nursery empty?

ALEXEY

Gorya, stop it.

GEORGE

What does it mean, Alexey? I want to see it—

ALEXEY

Gorya!

GEORGE

Leave me alone, I say. Don't touch me! How dare you stop me? And what is this, what do you think, who gives you the right to manage things here? This house is mine, do you hear? And the empty nursery is mine, and this empty—[*strikes himself on the chest*] heart of mine. Ah, mother! What is that? What are you carrying there? Look—she is carrying something.

[*Enter VERA, carrying bed clothes.*]

VERA

Gorya, I forgot to make the bed for you in the library.

GEORGE

In the library?

VERA

I lay down and suddenly recalled— What about his bed? Sasha went away with Katerina, she said she was afraid to go alone—

[*Goes to the library.*]

ALEXEY

Gorya, do you want me to stay up with you?

GEORGE

No. Where are the children? [*To FOMIN.*] Colleague, why do you stare at me with such senseless eyes, with the eyes of a frightened gazelle? I am jesting: I know very well that the children have left, I hear the bell ring. [*The bell rings in the corridor.*]

GEORGE

I am only surprised at my brother—he's a sportsman, he can't understand what it means when the nursery is empty. He cannot understand what it means when the bedroom is empty, when the house is empty, when the world is—

ALEXEY

[*In a whisper*]: Fomin, go and open the door.
[*Exit FOMIN.*]

GEORGE

Please, don't whisper. I tell you, Alexey,—it seems you have forgotten that you are my brother.

ALEXEY

Gorya, I remember, I remember.

GEORGE

If you remember, Alexey— If you remember, then kill me— You will not miss, as I have done. I fired three times—and only smashed a plate. [*Laughs.*] Do you understand how clever that is? It is a symbol—only a plate.

[*Enter KOROMISLOV, followed by FOMIN.*]

KOROMISLOV

Good evening, George.

GEORGE

How are you, Paul. You've come?

KOROMISLOV

What have you been doing?

GEORGE

I have smashed plates.

KOROMISLOV

Smashed plates?—Have you any cognac here? No? Why didn't you tell me, Alexey, I would have brought it along. What wine have you? No, that won't do. What is it, my friend, have you turned sour? [*Touches GEORGE's forehead.*] Oh, you have fever.

GEORGE

Paul! I—[*sobs, as he clasps his hand*]

KOROMISLOV

So. You are unhappy, Gorya?

GEORGE

I—I want to clasp a friendly hand— There are still some human beings, Paul—

KOROMISLOV

There are. Gorya, there are. Has Katerina gone away?

ALEXEY

Yes, she has left. And has taken the children with her.

GEORGE

He won't let me go to the nursery. I want to see the empty nursery.

KOROMISLOV

Your brother is strict. I know him. Well, but I will let you go wherever you like and I will go along with you, too. So your house is empty, and we may make all the noise we want—that's good. I like an empty house. Ah, you, Vera Ignatyevna, how do you? How is it you have no cognac in the house? You have plenty of everything, but no cognac.

[Walks off with her, saying something in a low voice.]

ALEXEY

Do you feel cold, Gorya?

GEORGE

No. Paul, where are you going. Paul!

KOROMISLOV

I am here. Look here, my friend, have you any money? I have none.

GEORGE

I have that.

KOROMISLOV

Very well then. We are going at once. And you, colleagues, you are coming along with us.

ALEXEY

Where?

KOROMISLOV

Where it is bright, where people are drunk, and where there is plenty of space. How can you stay in this house now?

GEORGE

Yes, yes, let us go. Thank you, Paul. [*Laughs.*] Is it possible that there is a place where it is bright now and where people are— O cursed house!

KOROMISLOV

There is such a place, Gorya, and fortunately more than one.

ALEXEY

Hold on, Paul! and mother? Is she going to stay here alone?

KOROMISLOV

Mother will stay here, alone—that's her affair, Alexey. I am always arguing with women, telling them that they must not bear any children, but they do bear children, so they are themselves to blame. Come, Gorya.

GEORGE

[*Obstinately*]: I want to go to the nursery first.

KOROMISLOV

If you want the nursery, then so it shall be. Gentlemen, to the nursery!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Six months have elapsed. KATERINA and the children are spending the summer at her mother's estate, in the province of Oryol. Hot days in the end of June.

A large, pannelled room with expensive furniture, paintings and flowers; the walls and the floor are not painted. Through the glass door, now open, is seen a large terrace with a dinner table covered with a colored cloth. There are many flowers there. Beyond the rails of the terrace, on the left, old maples and oaks are seen, and birch-trees grown dark with age. Centre and right, up to the solitary old oak, there is a wide golden-hued space. Towards evening.

MENTIKOV, short, with small facial features, his hair carefully combed, is sitting on the terrace, eating toast with milk; he brushes the crumbs from his checkered flannel suit with a colored handkerchief. TATYANA, KATERINA's mother, comes up from the garden; she is a tall woman with a stern and resolute face. Behind her comes her younger daughter LIZA, a strong, pretty girl with eyebrows close together. She walks with an air of obstinate but somewhat gay caprice, repeating in a soft capricious voice: "Mama! Mama! I am going away!" MENTIKOV rises when TATYANA appears.

TATYANA

What are you eating?

MENTIKOV

Milk.

LIZA

Mama, mama! I am going!

TATYANA

Don't pester me. [*To MENTIKOV.*] Haven't you had your dinner today?

MENTIKOV

Thank you, I had my dinner. But my health has been shattered by my mode of life in the city and the doctor told me—

TATYANA

Ah, shattered! Did they at least give you fresh milk?

MENTIKOV

Absolutely.

TATYANA

Absolutely what? [*To LIZA.*] Oh, leave me alone, Liza, really you make me tired. Don't tug at my dress.

LIZA

Mentikov, won't *you* take my part?

TATYANA

My daughters have found a protector, God Himself has sent him. Leave me alone, I say. [*To MENTIKOV.*] And you, my dear, since your health is shattered, you had better take longer walks, and work in the open air, instead of— Where is Katya?

MENTIKOV

I think, Katerina went to change her gown. We wanted to play croquet, but it is so hot now—

TATYANA

What an occupation you have found—croquet! It were better if— [*KATERINA passes through the room quickly and easily. She is tall, pretty, a very graceful blonde. Her movements are always unexpected, resembling an interrupted dance; at times she becomes altogether motionless, folds her hands under her chin and looks fixedly and surprised, raising her eyebrows—at such times she is silent; only occasionally she slightly nods her head negatively.*]

KATERINA

Here I am. Did you call me, mother? I heard your voice from the window.

[LIZA *winks comically to her sister and follows with a frown.*]

LIZA

Mama, Mama!

TATYANA

I didn't call you, I merely asked about you. Did you bathe today? Leave me alone, Liza! Here Arcady is complaining about his shattered health in the city, and I am telling him—

MENTIKOV

My health is of very little interest to Katerina Ivanovna,

TATYANA

[*Surveying him suspiciously*]: I suppose so. Katya, tell her to stop annoying me. Since early morning she's been following me and buzzing in my ear like a mosquito. She makes me sick.

LIZA

I am going to Petersburg in the winter.

TATYANA

Well, go.

LIZA

You only say that now, but when winter comes, you will say, "Stay here, pine away here, don't go anywhere."

TATYANA

How far off is winter? Of course I forgot to tell you: There is a letter from Lubochka, she writes from Switzerland that it's hot there, and that Kostenka had dysentery.

KATERINA

Really? How could she go with children, in such heat—! poor boy.

TATYANA

Who can argue with her and her husband? It's quite different here in this province— I invited them, but no!

Katya, do you know when I arose this morning? At six—

LIZA

And I got up at seven.

TATYANA

At six! And ever since then I have been on my feet, I didn't sit down for a minute's rest and I am not tired in the least.

MENTIKOV

Busy housekeeping?

TATYANA

No, I played croquet with Vassa and the manager!
[LIZA *laughs, kisses her mother on the back of her neck*
and suddenly assumes the pose of being deeply dis-
illusioned with life.]

LIZA

I am going to die. Katya, let us go and die!

KATERINA

I died already today when we went to play croquet.

LIZA

Mentikov, let us go and die!

MENTIKOV

[*Boldly*]: I want to live yet!

TATYANA

He would hate to have his hair ruffled.

LIZA

And I am not sorry for anything. What is there to be sorry about, what is there to be sad about?

[*She passes through the room slowly, with the same air of disillusionment. TATYANA follows her.*]

TATYANA

Wait, Lizochka, I think I will also go and die with you.

[*Exit.*]

MENTIKOV

How hot!

KATERINA

Come inside, it is cooler there.

MENTIKOV

Play something, Katerina Ivanovna. Grieg—

KATERINA

Now?

MENTIKOV

I'd like to hear music now.

KATERINA

It's remarkable how you always want things at the wrong time, Arcady Prosperovitch.

MENTIKOV

Yes? [*Pause.*] I am leaving this evening, Katerina Ivanovna.

KATERINA

What's that now?

MENTIKOV

My presence here is apparently not very agreeable to your mother, and you yourself seem as though—

KATERINA

Stay.

MENTIKOV

Katya—

KATERINA

Again? Remember what I told you, and I now repeat once more,—if you dare call me Katya again, or in any way remind me—

MENTIKOV

But you were mine, Katya, you were mine!

KATERINA

If you— If you— I will strike you right now.

MENTIKOV

Forgive me. I'll not mention it again. Don't think that I am afraid of your blow, Katerina Ivanovna. . . . You struck me once before. . . .

KATERINA

I am glad you still remember it.

MENTIKOV

Yes, I do remember it. And believe me, I am not afraid of another blow, but my love for you is unselfish and I want but one thing—to sacrifice myself day and night for the sake of your happiness! I will stay.

KATERINA

Why did you remind me of it? This morning I felt happy and I put on a white dress.

MENTIKOV

A white dress is an emblem of purity: you are an innocent victim.

KATERINA

Why did I put on a white dress? Oh, how dull he is! I was unhappy, I was mad, when I yielded to you. How insignificant you are— Don't you understand that I gave myself to you out of contempt, because of that bitter insult! He poisoned me. He dared suspect

that I was your mistress— Well, then let it be true that I was your mistress— Are you satisfied?

MENTIKOV

Believe the voice of my heart, Katerina Ivanovna, I shall never forget the happy moments you have given me!

KATERINA

And now he writes, he writes daily, he says he has convinced himself of his madness and he implores me— What shall I answer him? There was another letter yesterday. What shall I answer him?

MENTIKOV

You must be proud: he offended you, you are an innocent victim.

KATERINA

He wanted to kill me. That is terrible: he wanted to kill me. I can't understand it, and I am forever asking myself: "Is it possible that my life was so harmful or unnecessary or repulsive to him that he wanted to destroy it—to kill me?" Can any life be so repulsive? Now I would have been dead— What does it mean? Several nights ago it seemed to me that I was dead, and that sensation was so strange that I cannot describe it. It was not fear, no, but something else—

Where are you going, Arcady Prosperovitch? Sit down!

MENTIKOV

I am going for the ash-tray. I am listening.

KATERINA

Now he calls himself scoundrel and— But my God, what good is there in his words? And what is vileness? Was it vile to have anything to do with you at that time? or was it not?

MENTIKOV

You were insulted and slandered—

KATERINA

Don't speak. God knows how unhappy I was then! Like the worst human being— And it was he who forced me into your arms!

MENTIKOV

Who—God?

KATERINA

I don't understand— My husband, of course. Suddenly I felt that I must be yours, and that was so horrible— Why must I? Why? No, it was vile, it was disgusting! Wait, sit there quietly. I want to take a good look at you.

MENTIKOV

I feel embarrassed—

KATERINA

Sit still!

[Silently she looks at the motionless MENTIKOV and shakes her head with an air of despair. Then she goes aside quickly and raises her hands. Her hands fall down helplessly, she quickly leans her shoulder against the wall and stands silently, with lowered head.]

MENTIKOV

Do you love him?

[KATERINA nods her head negatively. Then changes her nod in the affirmative.]

I don't understand you, Katerina Ivanovna.

KATERINA

I don't know.

MENTIKOV

Perhaps?

KATERINA

Perhaps. I received another letter from Alexey. What a fine man he is! He is like my conscience and I will tell him— No, I will not tell him anything. Where are you going?

KATERINA

MENTIKOV

I am nervous! I feel like walking.

KATERINA

He writes me about mother, she also wants me to return now. Why didn't that woman love me? She is kind, she loves everybody, and yet she treated me so dreadfully, she always suspected me of something. Just think of it, am I to blame because I am—pretty? George was always busy with his work and I was forever alone? No, no,—I am not going to answer—I am dead, I am in the grave. That's why I wear this white dress—I am in the grave. Are you listening to me?

MENTIKOV

I am listening attentively.

KATERINA

Why are you sighing?

[MENTIKOV *keeps pacing the room, silently.*]

KATERINA

Why do you sigh?

MENTIKOV

[*Stopping*]: You are cruel! What if I am a non-entity, as you say, what if I am a small, modest man,

but I have a big heart—and I love you, Katerina Ivanovna.

KATERINA

I told you—

MENTIKOV

Please, please— Am I demanding that you reciprocate my love? But you should have pity on a man who only loves and respects you, who is devoted to you— Here I have been your business agent for several months, and of course I am proud of it, but, Katerina Ivanovna, I love and how must I feel when I hear you speak every day of your love for another! I cannot sleep nights, my heart is literally bursting—and if there were only the slightest sign of attention on your part. No sooner do I say a word about my feelings than you shout at me as at a dog, and you threaten to—drive me out. Me!

[He sits down at the table and cries, putting his hands on his knees.]

KATERINA

Arcady! *[Comes over to him and looks at him.]* You are crying? God, how disgusting! He is crying! Stop! Do you hear?

MENTIKOV

I hear.

KATERINA

KATERINA

Stop!

MENTIKOV

I am crying—I am crying over our poor child—that died before it was born—

KATERINA

Keep quiet.

[She leans against the wall, with lowered head, then walks out slowly. MENTIKOV looks around. He heaves a sigh, wipes his eyes with his squarely folded handkerchief, and taking out a small mirror, beholds himself and adjusts his hair. Sighs. LIZA runs in quickly from the garden.]

LIZA

Katya! Katya! Where is Katya? Alexey is here. Mentikov, my dear, where is Katya? Do you know, Alexey is here, I suppose it means peace. How handsome Alexey is and there is another handsome man with him. Mentikov, do you understand, this means that I am going to them in the winter, and mama will not be able to hold me back. Don't be sad, you will come along with us. If I were not such a big girl, I would have given you a kiss, but now—

[She seizes MENTIKOV by his hands and whirls him around the room. Then she runs out, calling:

“Katya! Alexey is here!” MENTIKOV *looks around with alarm and goes out.* ALEXEY and KOROMISLOV *walk up the stairway; KATERINA enters from opposite side, followed by LIZA.*]

KATERINA

Alexey! God! Alexey!

ALEXEY

How are you, Katya?

[*They kiss each other, and LIZA, rising on tiptoe, imitates them. KOROMISLOV kisses KATERINA's hand. All seem agitated.*]

KATERINA

Alexey, my dear, how happy I am that you have come! I am so happy—if you only knew—if you only knew. Will you have tea? I am also glad to see you, Paul. . . . Have you noticed my sister. Only yesterday she was a little girl, and now she is quite a young lady.

KOROMISLOV

I see her for the first time.

KATERINA

Liza, are you glad that Alexey is here? Just look at him, what a handsome fellow he is now.

LIZA

[*Emphatically*]: He is handsome.

ALEXEY

Liza, you are not bad-looking yourself,—only who has painted your eyebrows?

[LIZA *flares up and, frowning, looks at KOROMISLOV, who smiles.*]

KATERINA

Let us go inside—it is cooler there. How hot it is today. How was the journey? Sometimes there are no cabs at the station. I did not expect you—Alexey. I got your letter only yesterday, and today you are here— How about tea? Liza, tell them to prepare the tea.

LIZA

Right away.

[*Exit, looking sternly at the smiling KOROMISLOV.*]

KOROMISLOV

[*Seriously*]: Katerina Ivanovna, don't be excited, it isn't necessary.

[KATERINA *is about to say something, but instead she rises, advances two steps quickly, and presses her hands to her eyes. ALEXEY looks questioningly at KOROMISLOV, who makes a gesture as if he were*

drawing a figure with a pencil. ALEXEY frowns and waves his hand.]

ALEXEY

Katya, don't. Listen, Katya—

KOROMISLOV

You see, Katerina Ivanovna, we are here as representatives— I suppose you have guessed what it is all about.

KATERINA

[Without removing her hands from her eyes]: Only this minute.

KOROMISLOV

That's splendid. I like it when things are done openly and frankly. Well, Alexey, out with it, and you, Katerina Ivanovna, be seated and listen.

[KATERINA sits down, her face is flushed, tears and a smile are in her eyes.]

KOROMISLOV

Well, what are you waiting for Alexey? Begin.

ALEXEY

No, you'd better start. The whole affair is painful to me and—I wouldn't be able to say the right thing.

KATERINA

KOROMISLOV

Very well. In a word, Katerina Ivanovna, you must return to your husband, otherwise there will be a misfortune. I am speaking quite seriously and with full knowledge of the situation. Did he fire at you? Yes, he did—three times. As fools are lucky, he missed you, but now it may be he will not miss. This time, of course, he will not fire at you, understand?

KATERINA

I understand.

ALEXEY

Katya, why didn't you answer a single one of his letters? Such silence is worse than any words, Katya. And though I blame George from every point of view, it is pitiful to look at him. Why didn't you answer him?

KATERINA

I don't know.

ALEXEY

You didn't answer me either. You wrote about the children, about yourself, and you wrote all that,—forgive me, Katya,—without soul. You never answered a word about him.

KATERINA

I didn't know what to answer.

ALEXEY

Can't you forgive him?

KATERINA

I don't know.

ALEXEY

But you love him, Katya?

KOROMISLOV

Hold on, Alexey, that is not the way to do it. Katerina Ivanovna, to the point,—your husband arrived with us, he is sitting now behind those bushes, waiting for your permission to come in here.

KATERINA

[*Rising*]: No!

ALEXEY

Katya, but listen to me—

KATERINA

[*Putting her hand on her heart*]: No. [*Pause.*]

ALEXEY

[*Rising, sternly*]: Then we are to leave? Very well. Let us go, Koromislov.

KOROMISLOV

[*Forcing him to sit down*]: Alexey, this is only the beginning. Give her a chance to think it over, instead of clutching her by the throat so unexpectedly.

ALEXEY

Katya, I hardly expected this when I came here. Is it possible that there is so little generosity in you? When I was on my way here I thought I would meet that pure, magnanimous noble woman, whom only such an insane man as my brother could have suspected!

KATERINA

That woman is no more. She was killed before your eyes.

KOROMISLOV

She means that though the bullets missed her, and did not touch her body, they killed her soul. Isn't that what you mean, my dear? Well, that's nonsense—you can't kill a soul so easily. My dear, let me tell you, bombs have exploded in my soul, and you see—I'm alive, and am very glad of it. Everything passes, everything is forgotten, my dear. And you are so

young and so beautiful, and as far as I remember, your children are fine. Alexey and I will go and have some tea, we will examine your garden, while you will talk matters over with him here. After all it isn't very convenient for a member of Parliament to sit there in the bushes like a rabbit. You mustn't humiliate a man like that.

KATERINA

I will not return to him.

KOROMISLOV

Well, tell him that. It's impossible to carry on a conversation like this through a mediator. Don't you think so? Your park is beautiful—is this your mother's estate?

KATERINA

Yes.

KOROMISLOV

And the household is apparently in good order. Eh, it's a long time since I have been in a real Russian village, amidst grain landscapes, and now I feel rather ashamed of myself. I have been painting nude women, but I have grown sick and tired of them—

ALEXEY

Forgive me, Katya, I was too harsh with you.

KATERINA

[*Smiling*]: How foolish you are, Alexey. A real conscience should never ask forgiveness, whatever it may have said. You are my conscience.

KOROMISLOV

And I am your clock. Let us go, Alexey; but you, my dear, please, don't leave this room now. Your dress is in order, and so is your hair.—Wait here, my friend, he is not far away.

[*They go out.* KATERINA, *without rising, waits in the same chair; her hands are on her knees, her head is reclining. The sun has set and evening shadows have gathered in the garden. In the distance shepherds are playing their pipes. Silence. Walking heavily, GEORGE enters, looks around the terrace with fright and calls softly: "Katya!—No one is here."* He crosses the threshold irresolutely and at first does not notice KATERINA. He advances two steps cautiously.]

GEORGE

Katya, where are you, Katya?

[*Pause. Suddenly he notices his wife, sitting in the same pose, and he stands as petrified. Then he walks over to her resolutely, silently kneels before her and places her hands upon his head. KATERINA remains motionless.*]

Katya. I have come to you. Why are you silent, Katya? Look at me it is I—Katya!

KATERINA

[*Softly*]: Get up. Never mind. Get up, George.

GEORGE

[*Rising*]: Didn't you expect me?

KATERINA

I have been expecting you all the time.

GEORGE

Is that true? Katya, why didn't you answer my letters?—It drove me mad. Katya! Look, my hair has turned gray.

KATERINA

I see. I love you. No, no, don't come near me.

GEORGE

But why do your hands hang down like this? Katya, you have not moved from your seat since I came in—What is the matter with you, Katya? I am afraid, my darling. Are the children well?

KATERINA

The children are well. George—I am a bad woman—I deceived you.

[*Pause. She walks away, slightly swaying, then sits down in the armchair, lowering his head in his hands. Silence. The evening shadows are growing darker.*]

GEORGE

Then? At that time?

KATERINA

No. Do you still think I deceived you then?

GEORGE

No. Wait a moment— I don't understand anything just now. Tell me.

KATERINA

It is better not to talk, George.

GEORGE

No, speak.

KATERINA

I gave myself to Mentikov. Afterwards, after you wanted to kill me. Only once.

[*GEORGE rises and paces the room twice, then sits down again in the same pose.*]

GEORGE

Speak.

KATERINA

I underwent an operation. Nothing more.

GEORGE

[*Hoarsely*]: Nothing more?

KATERINA

Nothing more. It would be better not to talk.

GEORGE

Liza told me that Mentikov is here, that he has been here for more than a month. What is he doing here?

KATERINA

I don't know. I have no one to speak to. Do you feel deeply hurt?

[*Pause. George rises, paces the room several times, stretching himself, with clenched fists. Suddenly he walks over to his wife and kneels before her.*]

GEORGE

Forgive me, Katya. [*She jumps up.*]

KATERINA

What? Don't touch my hand. What?

GEORGE

Forgive me, Katya.

KATERINA

[*Shouts*]: Don't you dare! Don't you dare! Don't touch me, leave me.

[*He bends her head to his chest, thus stopping her cries.*]

GEORGE

Katya, my darling, what is the matter with you? Calm yourself. They may hear you. It is I, Katya. My poor Katya, my darling.

KATERINA

[*Softly*]: Leave me. For God's sake, leave me. I will cry again.

GEORGE

You are my love—you are my eternal and only love. Where shall I leave you? Where shall I leave you?

KATERINA

Leave me.

GEORGE

If you like, Katya, my dear Katya,—let us die together. Together—do you understand? Where shall I leave you? Where shall I go myself? Is there any place? Let us die, let us die together, and I will be happy.

KATERINA

I must die alone.

GEORGE

Alone? And what am I going to do? I swear to you, Katya, I give you my word of honor, if you would only— Open your eyes, look into my soul— Do you see, Katya? Do you see, Katya?

[Almost repulses her, goes over to the door and looks into the garden, holding his head with both hands. Raising her hands, KATERINA looks at him, and suddenly she makes over him the sign of the cross.]

GEORGE

[Dully, without turning to her]: Are you here, Katya? Don't go. My God! I am looking at this garden, at these evening shadows and I am thinking, how small we are, how dare we torture ourselves, when there is such beauty and peace here. Katya, why have I caused you so much pain? Why have I tormented myself? Will you come back to me, Katya?

KATERINA

If you want me to.

[GEORGE turns around, and walks over to her.]

GEORGE

Kiss me. *[Kisses her.]*

KATERINA

Leave me.

GEORGE

Are you happy?

KATERINA

Yes. And I am a little afraid. Kiss me.

GEORGE

My frightened sweetheart, you have nothing to fear, nothing. Is there anything that has terrors for love? Nothing! I am now like this wise old garden, and all the people are under my branches.

KATERINA

Let us take a walk.

GEORGE

As we used to do?

KATERINA

Yes. Listen, listen attentively!

GEORGE

I am listening, my dear child.

KATERINA

I am afraid of myself.

GEORGE

To-day we are getting married for the second time. You are my love! And you are so beautiful, so beautiful, that I am dazzled. When I came in and saw you—

KATERINA

It was terrible for you to come in? you walked so slowly.

GEORGE

And you did not even respond! I called you, I called you—

KATERINA

Ah, Gorya, I was as dead. You called me, and I wondered why you were disturbing the dead—don't disturb me. I am dead!

GEORGE

It was I who tortured you.

KATERINA

No, not you. Listen, Gorya!

GEORGE

I am listening, my child, I hear every word of yours.

KATERINA

I am afraid of myself. I am thinking, since I could

do what I have done—wait!—what could I not do? Why are you silent, Gorya,—do you think this is true?

GEORGE

Well, Katya, now you listen to me. I fired at you and wanted to kill you.

KATERINA

Did you really want to kill me?

GEORGE

Wait. But does that mean that I have now become a murderer, that I could murder, rob and so forth? Ah, my dear child, it does not follow,—on the contrary. Since that time, when death was in my hand, I value, I understand so well the value of a human life. At first, after that night, something strange happened to me; whenever I glanced at some one in the street or in Parliament, and I thought. “How easy it is to kill him!” I felt so sorry for him, and I was so cautious that I did not want to hurt him even by accident—

KATERINA

You have changed. I understand what you say, but you are a different man. My dear, it isn't necessary to speak of all this, but— Listen, when I was recovering, afterwards, I felt so ashamed and so afraid— No, I cannot!

GEORGE

Don't, don't speak of it. Katya, never speak of that again.

KATERINA

Very well. Mentikov is here.

GEORGE

He does not exist.

KATERINA

Very well.

GEORGE

Not at all, understand? That never happened. Perhaps you will not believe me—

KATERINA

I do believe you.

GEORGE

Believe me, my dear child,—but I have no feelings of any kind about this—Mentikov. He is so dreadfully insignificant—

KATERINA

Yes!

KATERINA

GEORGE

And he is like a parasite, existing only because of our uncleanness.

KATERINA

He does not understand anything.

GEORGE

Absolutely nothing. I know him. If you allow him to crawl, he will crawl, and if you stop him, he will crawl in another direction. And he always exists, he is always looking for things that are ready. One may be infected by him in a train— What is it, Katya?

KATERINA

Nothing. Don't touch my hand.

GEORGE

Does it hurt?

KATERINA

No, nothing. I am tired.

GEORGE

You have grown thin, Katya, but you are more beautiful than ever. Do you know, when I saw your hands today, I thought as I had thought before, that

the hands of human beings used to be wings before.
And do you still fly in your dreams?

KATERINA

No. Rarely. What a fine fellow Alexey has become
—Are you fond of him?

GEORGE

What a question! And Koromislov is also a splendid man. If you only knew how he helped me during those days—Katya—is it possible that you are my wife again?

KATERINA

Yes. [*Pause.*] Yes. My mother will be so happy.

GEORGE

[*Laughs, agitated*]: My God, what is happening to me—Katya? Yes, yes. Your mother? She is such a splendid woman,—we have been corresponding for some time,—she knew I was coming.

KATERINA

What? How sly she is. Gorya! Don't. Sit down, sit down. Why don't you smoke?

GEORGE

I forgot about it.

KATERINA

KATERINA

Here is the ash-tray—and matches?
[*Goes for the ash-tray, but changes her mind and brings another one.*]

KATERINA

Gorya, tell me, how have I changed? You asked me, and I thought it was necessary to say no, and yet I could not help saying yes!

GEORGE

Because you love me.

KATERINA

Yes, I do love you, but that is not all.

GEORGE

You would not have said it to another.

KATERINA

Another? Gorya, tell me—have you forgiven me entirely? No, that is not it, Gorya, tell me, why am I so nervous? so strangely agitated? Look, Gorya!
[*Stands before him, throwing her hands back and stretching herself as for a flight or for a leap into an abyss.*]

Look, Gorya, why is it? Here I stand—I feel like embracing you and hugging you and— Gorya!

[GEORGE *embraces her firmly. A prolonged kiss.*
Voices are heard below, on the terrace.]

KATERINA

Leave me, they are coming!

GEORGE

Katya!

KATERINA

Leave me.

GEORGE

That's because you love me.

KATERINA

Yes, because I love you.

[*Enter KOROMISLOV, ALEXEY and LIZA, making believe that nothing unusual has happened. Brief pause.*]

GEORGE

Were you in the garden?

KOROMISLOV

Yes, we were in the garden. George, I have decided that I am going to give up painting nude women, and am coming out here for the summer. Do you invite me, Katerina Ivanovna?

KATERINA

Yes.

KOROMISLOV

[*To GEORGE*]: And you, my host?

GEORGE

Of course!

KOROMISLOV

Ah! then we are going at once to Tatyana Andreyevna and tell her that all is well. Eh, young people, what are you doing with the old woman—she is shivering there! I have been arguing with women all my life, telling them they should have no children, and now they are to blame themselves. Well, George—
[*Takes GEORGE by the arm and walks aside. ALEXEY and LIZA on both sides of KATERINA.*]

ALEXEY

Thank you, Katya. Give me your hand. [*Kisses it.*] Gorya is a good man. Are you happy, Katya?
[*KATERINA, smiling, nods her head.*]

LIZA

I am also happy. Hold on, Alexey! Katya, how horrible, do you know, I have fallen in love with him, and he is going to paint my portrait.

ALEXEY

[*Shaking KATERINA's hand*]: And what about me? Have you forgotten me, Liza?

LIZA

I can't love two at the same time! Katya, has he painted your portrait?

ALEXEY

Are you jealous?

LIZA

As jealous as the devil— Oh, is mama here?

KOROMISLOV

[*Advancing*]: Well, Liza, the moon is coming out and it is time for us to go out in the park. You promised to show me a mushroom in the moonlight. And you Alexey, you had better go to Tatyana Andreyevna,—I can't, I am tired. You know better how to go about with the old woman.

LIZA

It isn't a mushroom, but an arbor—only we call it Mushroom.

KOROMISLOV

Oh, you have to prove it to me. Wait—perhaps

you will go to the park, and we will stay here? What do you think, Katerina Ivanovna?

GEORGE

No. You'd better go there, we have something to discuss yet. Alexey, tell mother that I will come in to see her myself a little later, meanwhile—

ALEXEY

I know, don't teach me. Why don't you thank me at least— The devil!

[*They laugh.* GEORGE *seriously clasps* ALEXEY's *hand.*]

KOROMISLOV

Let us go. Your arm, Liza! [*They start.*]

LIZA

What a funny man Alexey is—isn't he?

KOROMISLOV

Have you noticed it already?

[*They go out. It is half dark in the room—on the terrace the last rays of the sun and the first rays of the moon are blending.*]

GEORGE

Now we are wedded again, Katya. Why are you

silent? You frighten me again, Katya. Ever since they came in you did not say a single word. Let us sit down on the couch. I want to embrace you firmly.

KATERINA

Gorya, let us go to the children.

GEORGE

To the children? [*Irresolute for a minute.*] No, Katya, not now. We'd better see them tomorrow. My soul is so tired and agitated today that I cannot—that would mean new agitation.

KATERINA

Little Katie was asking for you all the time.

GEORGE

Yes? Tomorrow, my darling. My sweetheart, my bright madness—how can I tear away even a single glance from you. I am talking, but I do not know what I am saying. If Koromislov had not gone away just now— Why don't you smile, you silent light of my soul?

KATERINA

Gorya!

GEORGE

Yes?

KATERINA

Not today, Gorya.

GEORGE

[*Jestingly*]: When then?

KATERINA

I don't know. In a year from now.

[*Cries, reclining her head, and covering her eyes with the palms of her hands. GEORGE strokes her tenderly and cautiously on her bare arm.*]

GEORGE

Very well, my dear, my darling, my beloved. Very well, my little girl, my tormented heart! It will be as you say, my sweetheart. Have I come to torture you? I myself feel the pain so much—and I say nothing and will say nothing because I alone am to blame for this—
[*Pause. KATERINA rises.*]

KATERINA

No, no! I have lost my mind. Don't pay any attention to me. I love you. Embrace me more firmly, still more—still more— Now leave me.

GEORGE

No, I will not.

KATERINA

Leave me, really. Leave me alone now! You are my beloved.

GEORGE

What's going on with me?

KATERINA

Well, leave me alone now, really. Listen!

GEORGE

I am listening.

KATERINA

I want to play the same thing I played for you when I was your bride—remember?

GEORGE

Is that a subterfuge?

KATERINA

Really, I thought that if you came and asked me about something, I would play for— Shall I? Would you understand? You must understand.

GEORGE

I will understand, my joy. Is there a piano here?

KATERINA

In my room.

GEORGE

Oh yes! I have not yet been in your room, Katya!

KATERINA

Now wait—you must only listen, listen attentively. Will you?

GEORGE

You are shrewd.

KATERINA

Will you listen?

GEORGE

I will listen—as to our prayer.

[KATERINA walks off quickly, but returns after reaching the door.]

KATERINA

Will you? No, no, you go out on the terrace.

[Exit KATERINA. GEORGE goes out on the terrace and stands, leaning against the pillar. The moon throws light on his bare head. KATERINA plays—the sounds of the piano are distant and tender. The door opens quietly and MENTIKOV appears in

a white suit. He looks around, and walking on tip-toe, trying to make no noise, goes through the room. He notices GEORGE on the terrace and stands as petrified with fear. He adjusts his suit and his hair and goes out on terrace, greets GEORGE, without extending his hand.]

MENTIKOV

Good evening, George Dmitrievitch. [*A brief pause.*]

GEORGE

Good evening.

MENTIKOV

How did you travel?

GEORGE

Thank you, I travelled well. [*Pause.*]

MENTIKOV

You are listening?

GEORGE

Yes.

MENTIKOV

I am also very fond of music. Katerina Ivanovna

plays beautifully. I believe she studied at the conservatory?

GEORGE

No, she didn't.

MENTIKOV

Then I am mistaken.

[*Pause. MENTIKOV takes out his cigarette case.*]

MENTIKOV

Will you have a cigarette, George Dmitrievitch? I have my own brand.

GEORGE

Thank you. [*Both smoke and listen to the music.*]

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

KOROMISLOV's studio. *Through the large window are seen the snow-covered roofs of houses; in the distance, through smoke and mist, is seen the cupola of St. Isaacs. It is a cold, serene day. Expensive draperies are scattered over the furniture and the walls, forming bright, colorful spots; beautiful furniture of varied styles, wide couches, a high mirror. Spacious, generous, beautiful. KOROMISLOV is painting a portrait of LIZA. She has on a summer dress like the one she wore in the country, but she looks different. She is older, prettier, slimmer, but sadder. Now LIZA resembles her older sister KATERINA by her pose and her manner of holding her hands.*

KOROMISLOV

Turn your head this way. And look more cheerful, Liza.

LIZA

[Turning her head]: This way?

KOROMISLOV

Yes. A little more. That's right. [Pause.] Are you tired?

LIZA

Not yet. You'd better hurry, it'll be dark soon. It gets dark very early here.

KOROMISLOV

Never mind. Let us chat, Liza. Do you remember that summer when I lived at your house?

LIZA

Ah, don't remind me of it.

KOROMISLOV

Why not?

LIZA

Ah, my dear, don't. I was in love with you then.

KOROMISLOV

What's wrong about it? I was in love with you too.

LIZA

What a pity!

KOROMISLOV

What do you mean?

LIZA

That I am not in love now.

KOROMISLOV

And why not?

LIZA

Why not what?

KOROMISLOV

Why aren't you in love now?

LIZA

You are not the hero of my romance.

KOROMISLOV

The devil! . . . There's no more white paint. Rest a while, Liza. Do you feel cold? If you do, I can give you a shawl. I'll be ready in a minute.

LIZA

No, I'm not cold. Have you a shawl for me?

KOROMISLOV

I have everything. Eh, my dear, what a fool I was not to have painted your portrait at that time— Now I can't bring out that expression— No, it's gone!

LIZA

But it wasn't your fault. Who could tell that we would not meet for two years, and that I would manage to get old in the meantime?

KOROMISLOV

Old? [*Laughs.*] No, Liza, that isn't the point, nor is it that I have grown old. Wait, look at me this way— This way! No. You have grown prettier now, but—Liza, would you be sorry if I dropped this portrait and started a new one?

LIZA

It is you who should feel sorry, not I. You have worked on it, while to me it is immaterial where I sit.

KOROMISLOV

Yes, yes. I understand. It is immaterial to you where you sit?

LIZA

Of course. May I get up now?

KOROMISLOV

No, please, sit another minute—yes, yes. A little more to the left, that's the way. Could you laugh if, for instance, one clown were to slap another clown's face?

LIZA

[*Laughs*]: I could. I am sad now because Alexey left us and went to live in some furnished rooms. Do you know? I occupy his room now.

KOROMISLOV

No, I didn't know that.

LIZA

Why haven't you been to see us so long? It used to be more cheerful when you were around. You don't know anything about us, because you don't come to see us.

KOROMISLOV

Is it really a long time since I called on you?

LIZA

Very long. Gorya is surprised; he has asked me about it, but I didn't know the reason myself. You are so mysterious, and you always have an excuse for everything. You only seem frank, but in reality you are never frank. Am I right?

KOROMISLOV

That's true, Liza,—you are clever. Why did Alexey leave?

LIZA

That's just it, we don't know. He tells us why, but I don't believe him. Oh, how sick I am of all this mystery. No one looks straight—everybody looks aside.

KOROMISLOV

Do you ever go to the theatre?

LIZA

No!

KOROMISLOV

Why so harshly?

LIZA

Because I am tired of it. God, every day they send me to the theatre and they keep asking me: "Do you ever go to the theatre?" But why do you want to know whether I go to the theatre or not? And I know why they do it—as soon as they want to conceal something from me, they send me to the theatre. And my foolish mother asks me in her letters about the same thing—she doesn't know why they have a theatre here.

KOROMISLOV

I see that we must have a serious talk, Liza.

LIZA

It is high time!

KOROMISLOV

Well, let's drop this,—what a pity, what a pity—
[Removes the easel slightly and looks; LIZA, turning
her head, also looks at the portrait.]

KOROMISLOV

Lizochka, you will never be the same again—

LIZA

“Where are you, O burning youth? Where is my small white hand, where is my graceful foot?”

KOROMISLOV

Exactly! And what if I were to fall in love with you again?

LIZA

Roses do not blossom twice— Oh, my dear, all that is nonsense—love and so on. May I stretch myself?
[*Rising on tip-toe, without bending her knees, and stretching her arms, she walks across the studio.*]

LIZA

Well, now let us be serious.

KOROMISLOV

Why did Alexey leave? Perhaps he really has to work hard or—wait, has he perhaps fallen in love with you?

LIZA

Again about love?

KOROMISLOV

I am serious.

LIZA

Of course not! We were good friends. Listen, Paul Alexeyich, but you mustn't tell it to anybody—I think something happened between him and Katya.

KOROMISLOV

[*Surprised*]: And Katerina? Have they quarrelled?

LIZA

I don't know. But something has happened. Of late he avoided her, and tried to leave the house. She would ask him to stay and he would go away.

KOROMISLOV

Hm. And George?

LIZA

What do you mean? I don't understand.

KOROMISLOV

Nothing. I merely asked.

LIZA

Paul Alexeyich, you are also avoiding us—why is that? Why has my sister Katya changed so—?

KOROMISLOV

What do you mean?

LIZA

[*Softly*]: You know what I mean. [*Pause.*]

KOROMISLOV

I think I will bring you a shawl after all—it's cold here.

[*Carefully wraps shawl over her.*]

LIZA

What a beautiful shawl! Red is becoming to me—I look Spanish in red. How old are you, Paul?

KOROMISLOV

Why? Very old.

LIZA

A young man would never think of giving me a shawl, even if I were to die.

[KOROMISLOV *laughs softly and kisses her hand.*]

KOROMISLOV

Your tiny fingers are cold. And do you know what, Lizochka?—let us not talk about Katerina. Really! You are not a little girl any longer, and I don't want to fool you by sending you to the theatre—besides, I

couldn't fool you if I wanted to—and it isn't worth telling the whole truth, either. Perhaps it is too soon, and then one might not say the right thing—no, it isn't worth it. When it is necessary, you will see it yourself.

LIZA

Is it so terrible?

KOROMISLOV

I don't think it is so terrible, but it isn't worth talking about it now. See how the cathedral of St. Isaacs is glittering!

LIZA

And do you know that she paints and fixes her eyebrows?

KOROMISLOV

I know. Many ladies do that.

LIZA

Why has she changed that way? Paul, why has she changed? I am afraid. [*Pause. KOROMISLOV paces up and down.*]

LIZA

If you only knew how sad it is in our house. Everybody laughs when there is nothing to laugh about,

everybody talks— Gorya has visitors from morning till night—and one might think, how cheerfully the people live here. But in reality it is so sad that I don't feel like getting out of bed in the morning. I start to dress and then I suddenly wonder, what's the use? Is it worth while?

KOROMISLOV

How long has it been that way?

LIZA

I don't know, I suppose all the time. In the autumn, when I was coming here, I pushed the train with my feet in order to get here sooner, and now I think to myself, "You fool, you country fool, where were you hurrying?" But I can't go back; since I came here, I must stay.

KOROMISLOV

And George?

LIZA

He is like the rest of them. He is gray, gloomy, he never tells me anything frankly—he also laughs and sends me to the theatre. And—well, it's immaterial to me. I shall soon stop praying to God, too. I don't respect George any more now.

KOROMISLOV

Why not?

LIZA

[*Gloomily*]: I won't tell you. You know it yourself. My God, what liars people are, how they make believe and always want to deceive one another. Here is your shawl.

KOROMISLOV

But you feel cold, you queer girl.

LIZA

I don't feel a bit cold. Here it is. I don't want your shawl. So many women come to see you here, and do you give this shawl to all of them to cover themselves? How disgusting! Katya is better than all of you, although you complain because she paints her face. If you could, you would have painted your face, too.

[KOROMISLOV *laughs*. *Voices are heard behind the door and a well-dressed maid admits KATERINA, wearing a black velvet coat, hat and veil; and MENTIKOV who is without an overcoat.*]

KATERINA

Good afternoon, children. How cheerful it is here!

Don't kiss my hand with the glove on, Paul Alexeyevitch,—I don't like anybody to kiss the glove.

KOROMISLOV

Take off your coat, Katerina.

KATERINA

Do you think I should? No, it's hardly worth while, I am here only for a minute. Or shall I take it off? Very well, then, take off my coat, but I'll keep my hat on, it's such a bother. Why are you so red, Lizochka?

LIZA

I am not red.

MENTIKOV

Paul Alexeyevitch, have you tried to paint Katerina Ivanovna in a coat and veil?

KOROMISLOV

I have not. What will you have, Katerina Ivanovna, —tea, fruit or wine?

KATERINA

I don't want anything.

LIZA

Have you all these?

KOROMISLOV

Yes. Mentikov, please put this away.

MENTIKOV

[*Taking the coat and finding a place for it*]: If I were an artist I would have painted Katerina Ivanovna in coat and veil. I'll put it down here.

KATERINA

And the portrait—listen! Have you turned it to the wall, don't you want to show it?

KOROMISLOV

No, it isn't worth looking at. It isn't a success.

KATERINA

Please!

KOROMISLOV

No, my dear, no. Where are you coming from?
[MENTIKOV, *like a man familiar with such things, finds a folder in the corner, and is examining some sketches, closing one eye. KOROMISLOV looks at him askance.*]

MENTIKOV

We have been on an errand for George Dmitrievitch.
[*The telephone rings in the distance.*]

KATERINA

Yes, we took a certain document over to the Parliament. George is working so hard now that I am beginning to fear for his health— If you would only urge him— [*Enter the maid.*]

MAID

Paul Alexeyevitch, you are wanted at the telephone.

KOROMISLOV

I am coming. Pardon me, I'll be back in a minute.
[*Goes out quickly, casting a suspicious glance at*
MENTIKOV.]

KATERINA

Have you been here long, Liza? Liza, there is a letter for you from Alexey.

LIZA

Where is it?

KATERINA

At home, of course. And you are so impatient— Oh, those lovers!

LIZA

We are not lovers.

KATERINA

No? What are you looking at, Arcady Prosperovitch? How splendid!

[*She glances over his shoulder and walks off; KOROMISLOV returns.*]

Anything interesting?

KOROMISLOV

Oh, just a man I know—

KATERINA

Not a woman? No, no, I am only jesting. What was I going to say? Yes,—why don't you come to see us? George is asking for you every day.

KOROMISLOV

I am working, my dear, working.

KATERINA

And do you also drink?

KOROMISLOV

I drink at night. Eh, Mentikov, look out, see that you don't take along one of my drawings by mistake.

MENTIKOV

[*Laughs*]: How you slander an innocent man! But

the truth is the truth—I am surely going to ask you for this little sketch.

KOROMISLOV

What else? Oh no, my dear fellow, leave it alone. You know, he has already quite a collection of my drawings.

MENTIKOV

But this one is so small! What does it cost you?

KOROMISLOV

It is worth money.

MENTIKOV

You'll make another one!

KOROMISLOV

Well, give it back to me, give it to me. You'll tear it. I'll close the folder, or the temptation is too great. I see— [*Closes the folder and puts it away.*]

MENTIKOV

Eh!

KATERINA

Please, no sighs, Arcady Prosperovitch. Since he won't give it to you, evidently he can't. See, how beautiful—the sun is setting. Look, Liza!

LIZA

I see it from here.

KATERINA

How beautiful it must be in the country now! I am myself a country girl too, Paul Alexeyevitch,—my sisters are country girls. Listen, Paul, if I were to rush forward and strike my head against that glass, where would I fall?

KOROMISLOV

Into the street.

KATERINA

A lifeless corpse? Look!

*[Lifts her hands and stretches herself as if for a flight
—but there is exaggeration and artificiality in her
pose.]*

LIZA

Katya, don't. It is unpleasant to look at you this way!

MENTIKOV

Just stand this way, Katerina Ivanovna. I must take a photograph of you in this pose some day. Paul Alexeyevitch, do you know the news? I have become

a photographer after all! A wonderful little camera, stereoptican—and the photographs are excellent—

KATERINA

I'm not feeling well. [*Sinks down on the couch.*]

KOROMISLOV

[*Roughly*]: I don't know whether there is any water here. Do you want wine?

KATERINA

No, I feel better. Lizochka—

LIZA

Good-by, Paul Alexeyevitch.

KOROMISLOV

Where are you going, Liza? I am so sorry that I tortured you for nothing today. Come Tuesday—I will paint you as a Spanish girl.

LIZA

But my dear, I am not a Spanish girl!

KOROMISLOV

What are you then? I can't understand you any longer.

LIZA

I? [*Closing her eyes and reclining her head.*] I am simply a poor Liza. Katya, Katya dear, are we going together?

KATERINA

No, I am going to stay here a little while, my head is reeling. May I stay?

KOROMISLOV

Of course, my dear, what a question! We'll take off the hat—

LIZA

[*Quickly, whispering*]: Save her.
[KOROMISLOV *looks questioningly and gloomily.*]

LIZA

Yes, yes, you can do everything. Save her!

KATERINA

What are you whispering there, Liza?

LIZA

Nothing, a secret. Good-by, my dear, I'll fall in love with you again before long. Shall I? Love is free— Is the Spanish girl all right?

MENTIKOV

[*Perplexed*]: And what about me?

KATERINA

You escort Liza.

MENTIKOV

But we came together.

LIZA

Well, my little toreador, come on, there is no use arguing.

KATERINA

But Liza, please, don't go in the car. Take a cab.

LIZA

Why, Katyechka? I like the car. I had enough of the horses in the country. The toreador and I will not fall, nothing will happen to the little toreador and myself.

MENTIKOV

[*Sourly*]: Would you like to go in an automobile?

LIZA

Really?

MENTIKOV

I'll get a taxi.

LIZA

[*Respectfully*]: Do you know, there is really something Spanish about you. Come on.

[*They walk off; MENTIKOV bids KATERINA good-by and says something to her imploringly.*]

KOROMISLOV

Don't go with him in an auto.

LIZA

[*Surprised*]: Why not? What nonsense!

KOROMISLOV

I beg you, Liza.

LIZA

What could happen?

KOROMISLOV

I beg you.

LIZA

Very well, my dear, but God, how mysterious you are all here and how repulsive! Good-by!

KOROMISLOV

[*Following her.*] I'll help you on with your coat. Mentikov, Liza is waiting for you.

MENTIKOV

I am coming, I am coming!

[*Remaining, alone at the door, he sends KATERINA a kiss. KATERINA alone. She quickly rises, removes her hat and bends before the mirror strangely. She looks down into the street—and walks away, terrified. She sits down where she sat before in a pose of despair, but as soon as KOROMISLOV enters, she changes her pose and looks more calm. KOROMISLOV stops a few steps away from her. Pause.*]

KATERINA

Paul, come here!

KOROMISLOV

No, I will stay where I am. [*Pause.*]

KATERINA

You don't love me any longer?

KOROMISLOV

I never loved you.

KATERINA

Why do you say that? Are you serious? No, that is not true, you did love me.

KOROMISLOV

No.

KATERINA

[*Questioningly*]: Then it was contemptible.

KOROMISLOV

I never said that I loved you. Try to recall, Katerina Ivanovna.

KATERINA

There is nothing sacred to you!

KOROMISLOV

It's very possible that you are right. I am a bad man. And in this sense I accept your reproach completely.

KATERINA

If you didn't love me, why did you— Are you jesting? Don't frighten me, Paul.

KOROMISLOV

No, my dear, I am not jesting. I have a bad rule—never to decline a woman who comes to me herself. It's a bad rule, there is no use denying, but then I never pose as a saint. It's bad,—I don't deny it.

KATERINA

But why do you act this way now? Or have your rules changed now?

KOROMISLOV

Because I don't want to. Because all this has become too abominable and— Who knows? Deceiving others, one often deceives oneself, and in the end I never know whether I am deceived, or whether I have deceived some one else. Besides, what is the difference?

KATERINA

So that's the man you are—were you scared, Paul, when I wanted to throw myself out of that window?

KOROMISLOV

No, not very. We artists who paint women, and physicians who treat women, constitute two dangerous groups—that is, dangerous to the women. Either we men know the women too well, or we don't know them at all. . . .

KATERINA

You are in love with Liza?

KOROMISLOV

Nonsense, my dearest. And, besides, I would advise you not to talk about your sister.

KATERINA

Are you jesting? [*Pause.*]

KOROMISLOV

Katerina Ivanovna, why did Alexey leave your house?

KATERINA

I don't know.

KOROMISLOV

You lie, my dear.

KATERINA

No, I don't lie. How am I to know why Alexey left the house? Perhaps he has work to do. And why do you ask me about him? You had better ask Liza.

KOROMISLOV

You lie. Katerina Ivanovna, listen to me. I have seen a great deal of life, and yet even I am terrified sometimes when I look at you. I can't understand what is going on with you—I look at you and am at a loss. Of course, I don't demand of you to be perfectly frank with me, but, my dear, try, just try to talk with me. I am not your husband, you may tell me everything.

KATERINA

You are jesting. Nothing is wrong with me.

KOROMISLOV

That is terrible. [*Pause.*]

KATERINA

Paul, come here. You didn't kiss me even once to-day. [*Pause.*] Paul. So this is the way you treat your guests?

KOROMISLOV

That is terrible. Katerina Ivanovna, why don't you drive Mentikov out of the house?

KATERINA

What nonsense! What for? He is very kind and accommodating, and George needs him all the time. He does errands for George. Paul—are you jealous?

KOROMISLOV

That is terrible! [*Pause.*]

KATERINA

Very well, then, I'll tell you. May I come nearer to you? It is hard for me to talk to you when you are so far away.

KOROMISLOV

Come here.

[KATERINA *walks over to him, and touching the buttons*

of his coat, looks into his face with wide open eyes; her eyebrows are raised painfully.]

KOROMISLOV

Well?

KATERINA

Listen to me, Paul, I will tell you— Now tell me first, were you serious? Tell me.

KOROMISLOV

Yes.

KATERINA

Oh, don't, don't be angry, I'll tell it to you. Paul, perhaps it would be better that I die?

KOROMISLOV

Are you suffering?

[KATERINA *lowers her eyes and nods her head negatively.*]

KATERINA

No.

KOROMISLOV

Do you feel any pain? How do you feel? Tell me! Do you ever, in your lucid moments, realize what is becoming of you?

[KATERINA *silently nods affirmatively.*]

That nonentity Mentikov, whom I will eventually drive out of my house because he is stealing my sketches—I— Now I think Alexey, and perhaps someone else— Why did Alexey leave?

KATERINA

I don't know. There was no one else.

KOROMISLOV

Is that true?

[KATERINA *is silent; she touches the buttons of his coat.*]

Terrible!

KATERINA

That's true. There was no one else.

KOROMISLOV

Terrible, Katya! Unfortunately I am an artist, spoiled for life and there are moments when I—how shall I say it?—watch with a certain degree of interest and pleasure how this new sensation is coming out in you and— And then I feel like undressing you—no, no!—and painting you as a bacchante!—My God, what an unknown force a human being is! I don't know whether you realize it yourself, but sometimes there is

about you a certain devilish temptation, and in your eyes—of course, at times—

KATERINA

I feel it.

KOROMISLOV

And you want it?

[KATERINA *silently touches the buttons of his coat.*]

KATERINA

I don't know. Perhaps.

KOROMISLOV

Go!

KATERINA

Kiss me.

KOROMISLOV

Leave me!

KATERINA

Kiss me.

[KOROMISLOV *tears himself away and paces up and down the room. KATERINA remains standing on the same place, her eyes lowered, her hands hanging down. Silence.*]

KOROMISLOV

I don't know what kind of a woman you were before. I did not know you well enough, just as I don't know the women who were not my mistresses—but now you are terrible! I have made a mistake: You are not a bacchante. You are dead, and you are leading this depraved existence—in a dream!

KATERINA

Wait!

KOROMISLOV

How disgusting, how base! When I came near you, I thought you were a living human being, and as with a living human being there would be struggle and so forth—but I was merely a pirate, robbing the dead. You are dead, Katerina! How disgusting!

KATERINA

Wait, wait!

KOROMISLOV

Of course, you must die. Ask your husband to shoot and kill you!

KATERINA

Wait! Paul, what did you say? I must die? Yes, yes, I must die. But how shall I die? I don't know.

how, I don't know how! My God, what shall I do, to whom shall I go? Paul—Paul, what shall I do?

[She roams about the studio like a blind person, stumbling over the furniture.]

KATERINA

Paul! There beyond that window is a precipice—a precipice. Yes, yes, it is terrible, it is terrible!

[She covers her eyes with her hands, and swaying, moves slowly to the window. KOROMISLOV advances a step toward her and watches, his hands on his breast.]

KATERINA

[Moving forward]: God, I am going, I am going. I am going—

[She stops near the window, looks through it, and raising her hands, sinks to the ground with a sob. She lies motionless, face downward, as though struck by a bullet.]

KOROMISLOV

Katerina!

[He walks over to her and bends down. He touches her shoulder cautiously.]

Katerina, Katya, as a friend I beg you— Get up, my dear. Don't lie like this.

KATERINA

[*In a whisper*]: I am ashamed.

KOROMISLOV

I can't hear you.

KATERINA

[*Louder*]: I am ashamed because I cannot do it—I'll do it later. Leave me, go away.

KOROMISLOV

Nonsense, get up! You are not to blame! Please, my dear— That's the way, and don't hide your face—such things happen, and you don't have to do anything to yourself. I will put you down in this chair and will give you wine— Or don't you want any? Very well, then— Really, it's an absurd habit to try to cure everybody with wine. Well, do you feel better?

KATERINA

Yes.

KOROMISLOV

That's splendid. My window is indeed— Let me pull down the shade.

KATERINA

Don't, it isn't necessary. Let me see it—

KOROMISLOV

What?

KATERINA

Liza's portrait.

KOROMISLOV

It isn't worth while, my dear, it doesn't look like her, it's very poor. Besides, it is dark already, and you will not be able to see the colors.

KATERINA

Let me see it.

KOROMISLOV

Very well, if you insist— [*He turns around the portrait and looks at it together with KATERINA.*]

KOROMISLOV

Do you understand what I wanted to do? In reality this is only a recollection—Liza is different now—not entirely different—but at that time, in your house, that summer— Don't cry, my dear, don't!

[*Reclining her head to one side on the back of the chair, her hands hanging down, she cries softly, without looking at the portrait.*]

KOROMISLOV

Yes, life. Perhaps I should also cry, but what is the use, it's too late—and I have no tears. It would do no harm for me to cry. I am a peculiar man, I have never cried, even in my childhood, and I always thought that if I should ever cry it would be tears of blood. Do you understand? [*The telephone rings in the distance.*]

The telephone, the devil take it. May I go? Just a minute.

[*KATERINA nods affirmatively. During his absence she remains seated in the same pose, but she stops crying.*]

KOROMISLOV

[*Entering*]: George telephoned, he will be here soon. What does he want? He says he is anxious to see me—he hasn't seen me in a long time. Judging by his voice, he seems to be in a good mood. Well, my dear, how about it?

KATERINA

Shall I go?

KOROMISLOV

You'd better go. How do you feel?

KATERINA

I'll go directly.

KOROMISLOV

You needn't hurry, there's plenty of time. George—Katerina, you are now in your full senses— Can you listen to me?

KATERINA

Yes. Why is George coming to see you now?

KOROMISLOV

I don't know. To be brief, the window and the precipice—all that is nonsense, drama, moving pictures—Isn't that so? But the real thing is that you must pull yourself together, and I ask you urgently to do that, I demand that you do it. Do you promise?

KATERINA

[*Rising*]: Where is my hat?

KOROMISLOV

Here it is. What has happened after all? All will be well again, all will readjust itself, if only you—

KATERINA

Find my pin, it's here on the floor. You don't know how to be attentive to a lady—it's time that you learned it.

KOROMISLOV

[*Finding the pin*]: Do you give me your word?

KATERINA

Listen, Paul, are you serious?

KOROMISLOV

What do you mean?

KATERINA

That all will be well again? Let me have my coat—Do you like it? Mentikov says you should paint me this way. Why don't you want to paint me? Then I would come to you every day.

KOROMISLOV

Katerina.

KATERINA

Again? Don't be angry—it isn't good! It's not becoming to you to be angry. You should be calm, indifferent—then your company is pleasant to women.

KOROMISLOV

But I still believe—

KATERINA

Are you serious? Don't be serious.

KOROMISLOV

I still believe!

KATERINA

Very well, then, you are such a dear and I— Kiss me! [*Pause.*] I am leaving—when a lady leaves you may kiss her. As a relative or—

KOROMISLOV

What about Alexey?

KATERINA

Why do you ask about Alexey? You have again some dreadful thoughts. Well, only one kiss, like a friend— Don't you want to? Well, come on, or my husband will soon be here [*wide eyed*]*—my husband!* [*KOROMISLOV is silent.*]

KATERINA

Ah! You are afraid of my husband. And what if I were to tell Gorya—he would challenge you to a duel, what then, eh? You are afraid? I am jesting, he does not know how to shoot. Well, here, kiss my hand if you don't want to kiss me on the lips. What, not even my hand? God, how angry you are. I will come to you tomorrow.

KOROMISLOV

Don't.

KATERINA

And if I should like to look out of your window again? There— [*wide eyed*] there is the precipice. How did you say it before—*precipice*.

KOROMISLOV

I will not be at home.

KATERINA

And suppose I am only jesting about all this? [*Making believe that she is crying.*] What an angry man—he doesn't believe anything—he would not even escort me to the door. You bad man! Good-by! [*Opening the door*]: Is it true that I resemble a bacchante? No, that isn't what I was going to say. Persuade Gorya—how did you say it?—to shoot me. Or perhaps you would do it yourself?

[*Exit, laughing.* KOROMISLOV *paces the room gloomily, then stops in front of the portrait and examines it, his hands in his pockets. He whistles. He shakes his head indefinitely. He is about to take the brushes, and on the way glances at himself in the mirror, grows thoughtful and returns. Turns the portrait around. Enter GEORGE.*]

GEORGE

Good evening, Paul. How are you? I just met my wife at the entrance. She complained that you drove her out. Why so cruel?

KOROMISLOV

I think you must be tired of her even at home. Will you have wine? [*Rings.*]

GEORGE

Perhaps. How beautiful it is here—what a happy man you are to be able to live like this. I am exhausted with my affairs—I am on two committees,—the other day I spoke in Parliament—

KOROMISLOV

I read it and congratulated you—[*Maid enters*] Masha, let us have some wine, you know the kind I want. I read it, my friend.

GEORGE

Your maid is not bad-looking.

KOROMISLOV

That's to mislead the husbands.

GEORGE

[*Laughing*]: Yes, you are a ladies' man—

KOROMISLOV

A ladies' man. Why are you in a frock coat? Aren't you coming from home now?

GEORGE

[*Looking at himself*]: That's right, I am in a frock coat. I didn't think of it. I sometimes get into this suit in the morning and wear it until late at night. Well, what have you painted? let me see!

KOROMISLOV

You don't look well at all. And if you put on a frock coat, you should see that it is clean.

GEORGE

That is not my fault, that's the servant's fault—
[*The maid brings wine.*]

She is not bad-looking at all. Paul, why have you forgotten all about us? Working hard? We have interesting people coming to see us— You remember Teplovsky? He is a composer, a pianist now—he'll soon be a celebrity—he comes to see us frequently. He wanted to call on you. And Katya, although she neglected her music, plays sometimes—you should come to hear some music—it's hoggish of you not to come, Paul—hoggish!

KOROMISLOV

Shall I turn on the light?

GEORGE

No, it isn't necessary. [*Pause.*]

KOROMISLOV

Gorya, what is going on in your home?

GEORGE

Why? Nothing in particular, I think. [*Pause. Both light cigarettes.*] [*Changing his voice.*]: As a matter of fact—it's really very bad. Do you know anything about it?

KOROMISLOV

I do.

GEORGE

Did Katya tell you?

KOROMISLOV

I guessed it myself. Why do you keep quiet, George? Speak, that wouldn't make things worse.

GEORGE

There is nothing particularly bad yet. It is true, the children are somewhat neglected, and so forth—

But Katya is by nature a healthy woman, and I think that everything will adjust itself. It's a pity that Alexey left—he had a good influence on her.

KOROMISLOV

And you?

GEORGE

I? My influence, you know, is in general like the influence of a husband—

KOROMISLOV

Why don't you drive Mentikov out of the house? Pardon me for talking to you so frankly, but we are not small children and there is no use playing hide and seek. By the way, how does Mentikov manage to live? I once asked him about it, and he replied: "I am a gentleman, and do not have to live by my own work."

GEORGE

There is no use playing hide and seek— Paul, everything is ruined—everything is lost. The form of life seems to have remained—the household, the children, and my work— Today the children put on new suits of clothes—but when I look deeper—then I am filled with terror. What shall I do, Paul, what shall I do?

KOROMISLOV

When did it start?

GEORGE

I don't know. I didn't notice at first. It started long ago. Paul, do you think—tell me frankly—do you think I am responsible for all this? Eh?

KOROMISLOV

How shall I say—

GEORGE

Wait. Is it possible that it was I who distorted a human being, a human image with my own hand? Just think of it.

KOROMISLOV

Not exactly, but a combination of circumstances—and characters. How shall I put it, without blundering? There is too much of the feminine, of the woman, in Katerina Ivanovna. Suppose I, a man, am going to the Kingdom of Heaven, I tell everybody about it, and everybody sees it—here is a man going to the Kingdom of Heaven. But a woman? The devil knows where she is going! She is leading a depraved existence, or she is praying for her depravity, or she is reproaching someone— A sort of eternal Magdalene for whom depravity is either the beginning or the end, it is her Golgotha,

her horror and her dream, her paradise and her hell. She is silent, she is hiding, she consents to everything, she smiles, she cries— Does Katerina cry frequently?

GEORGE

No. I haven't noticed. Rarely.

KOROMISLOV

I suppose she cries, like a cat, somewhere in the attic. How can you know what she needs? If you understand—there is a saint, beauty, purity, heavenly bliss, but if you don't understand—you come to the devil's hell. Have you tried to talk to her openly?

GEORGE

I have. She lies in every word she says.

KOROMISLOV

Of course. She lies to me, too, although it would seem there is no need for that. You and I think that she is lying, but it simply means that she does not believe in your logic, even as you don't believe in ghosts, she does not believe in your world, in your facts, because she has a world of her own. Understand her, if you want to.

GEORGE

Yes. Have you noticed her eyes?

KOROMISLOV

Painted?

GEORGE

Oh, not that! She is like the blind. Watch her as she walks, she stumbles over the furniture. What sort of a world does she live in? And at the same time—she is terrible, terrible. I can't tell you all, but our—nights—they are a red nightmare, a frenzy!

KOROMISLOV

Forgive me an indelicate question. Why don't you have any more children?

GEORGE

She doesn't want any.

KOROMISLOV

And you?

[GEORGE shrugs his shoulders. Silence. It is growing dark, and the huge square of the window is becoming blue.]

KOROMISLOV

Why don't you shoot her down, Gorya? It would be a good deed.

GEORGE

Yes? I can't. Let us walk. Do you know, I am very pleased that we are at last talking like this—man to man. It is so beautiful here, not at all as in my house. Does this window overlook the street?

KOROMISLOV

Yes. Why can't you do it? are you afraid you haven't enough strength, or have you lost faith in yourself?

GEORGE

Strength? No, my dear friend, who am I to judge another human being? I don't understand myself, and yet to judge another— That isn't it, either, but I cannot, I cannot do anything, understand?—I cannot do anything. A beggar! Is it foolish submission to fate, or the spirit of the slave who merely didn't have the opportunity—

KOROMISLOV

Now, now, that's too much.

GEORGE

Oh, Paul, you don't know all the depths of my misery. Here I am complaining to you that she lies to me—while I? I am lying to you right now—not in what I am telling you, but in the expression of my face—in

stead of crying, I am arguing as in one of my committees. And my work with which I am shielding myself against my conscience, isn't that a lie? Oh! What shall I do, what shall I do? [*They pace the room in silence.*]

KOROMISLOV

I have lived long, Gorya, and have noticed one thing— Every man who respects himself has but one bullet, a single bullet, that he can use only once in the course of a whole life— Understand? And if you were in a hurry, or missed, or wasted it for nothing, then—

GEORGE

I understand, you needn't complete the sentence. You are a poor comforter, but what can you do—you can't change the words of a song.

[*Silence. They pace the room and smoke.*]

KOROMISLOV

Could you kill yourself, Gorya? I am just interested to know.

GEORGE

I understand. To tell you the truth—I don't know. Rather no than yes.

KOROMISLOV

And have you no hope?

GEORGE

There is always hope, unfortunately.

KOROMISLOV

Unfortunately. Why don't you drink some wine?

GEORGE

Thanks, I don't feel like drinking. I think they have already lighted the lanterns outside.

[They walk over to the window and look out, their silhouettes stand out against the lighted window.]

GEORGE

It's high?

KOROMISLOV

The sixth story. A precipice.

GEORGE

But it's beautiful. Well, Paul, but one must live?
[Both are silent, dark and motionless. It is growing brighter outside and darker in the room. Silence.]

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Guests at KOROMISLOV's studio. The furniture is rearranged—some things have been added—a piano, flowers on the table and in vases. On one side a table with wine, sandwiches and fruit. The large window facing the street is half covered. Towards the rear of the studio a couch in a corner separated by a curtain; only a small lamp with a blue shade is there, it is half-dark. The light is concentrated in the centre of the studio. There everything is bright and full of color.

KOROMISLOV, talking and joking, is working on a painting entitled "Salome with the head of the prophet." KATERINA is Salome. Half-naked she stands on a platform, with lowered head and eyes. In her outstretched hands she holds a thin decorative vessel in which is supposed to be the head of John the Baptist.

TEPLOVSKY, the pianist, is at the piano. He is a corpulent man, with a fat clean-shaven face and white teeth which he shows. His behavior is somewhat arrogant. Two comrades of KOROMISLOV, also artists, TOROPETZ and LUDWIG are either near the easel or the wine table. At the table a boy of about fourteen, a nephew of KOROMISLOV, is tending clumsily.

MENTIKOV, *self-satisfied and gay*, ALEXEY and LIZA are also there. LIZA is sitting in the dark corner, listening to the conversations; ALEXEY, no longer in students' uniform, is roaming about, regarding ironically everything that is said and done by the artists.

KOROMISLOV

No, no, that isn't bad. Teplovsky, why don't you drink any wine? Drink, there is no one to look after you. The ladies have spoiled you.

TEPLOVSKY

[*Laughing and showing his teeth*]: And you? You'd better keep quiet, you old sinner.

KOROMISLOV

If something is wrong about this household, please forgive the bachelor. Zhura— Ladies and gentlemen, have you met Zhura? Come forward, Zhura. This is my nephew from the country—a talented boy— Try to manage things, Zhura, don't be bashful. Look after the ladies.

TEPLOVSKY

There aren't many ladies here.

KATERINA

[*Without changing her pose*]: And what about me?

TEPLOVSKY

What sort of a lady are you? You are the maiden Salome, and in the hands of this Herod into the bargain. My friend Paul, that isn't right, you compromise yourself— Is this a piano? [*Strikes two or three bars.*] You could have bought a good instrument. You are making lots of money.

KOROMISLOV

Aren't you tired, my dear? Well, suffer, suffer a little longer—one must make sacrifices for the sake of art. I have no money—I hired this piano— Why, is it so bad?

MENTIKOV

Let me manage things here. I know how.

KOROMISLOV

You? Very well. Will you look after the drinks too?

MENTIKOV

I? I have already had five cognacs, and now I am going to take some liquor—or perhaps some more cognac. What do you advise? Toropetz.

TOROPETZ

[*From afar*]: Go to the devil! [*Laughter.*]

LUDWIG

He stole a sketch from Toropetz yesterday.

MENTIKOV

What an expression! Well, how about it, Zhura—what are we going to do now? What will you have, Teplovsky?

TEPLOVSKY

I'll help myself.

ALEXEY

Paul!

KOROMISLOV

What is it, my friend?

ALEXEY

Do you say that to all ladies?

KOROMISLOV

What?

ALEXEY

That art demands sacrifices.

KOROMISLOV

To all. They love attention.

ALEXEY

And art loves sacrifices?

KOROMISLOV

And art loves sacrifices. What do you think of it, Toropetz? Why do you look at it so strangely?

TOROPETZ

[*Shaking his head energetically*]: No. I don't like it.

KOROMISLOV

Oho! And what is it you don't like?

LUDWIG

Nonsense— He puts it too strongly.

MENTIKOV

Just think of the news! This is the sixth glass I have had—I am quite drunk already! Katerina Ivanovna, don't scold me this evening—this is the sixth drink I have had— Teplovsky, will you have some caviar! I bought it myself at Yeliseyev's.

TEPLOVSKY

[*Eating*]: You? How so?

MENTIKOV

Paul Alexeyevitch asked me to. [*In a loud whisper.*] Teplovsky, have you noticed how beautiful our Katerina is this evening? She's wonderful! Why do you call on them so rarely?

TOROPETZ

I am telling you there isn't a penny's worth of Salome in her. Salome— That is something, my friend—in her eyes alone there should be so much of that—fire that burns you on the spot like a straw hut. And what is this? A girl in a German tavern holding a tray. Sa-lo-me!

ALEXEY

[*Ironically*]: I also think this is not Salome. Salome is quite a definite type.

TOROPETZ

Isn't that so?

KOROMISLOV

We'll show her to you at once. [*To KATERINA.*] Well, just look at this doubting Thomas—you know how! That's the way— Splendid!

[*KATERINA looks at TOROPETZ and runs off the platform, laughing. Applause.*]

TEPLOVSKY

Bravo, Salome! The artist is consumed like a straw hut.

MENTIKOV

Bravo, Salome!

KATERINA

Teplovsky, let me have some wine. Would you like me to look at you that way?

TOROPETZ

What a surprise! Well, she looked, she scorched and pierced me— But why do you paint her without her eyes. What is she—a school girl? Where is her passion? And where is her sin, and where is her longing?

KOROMISLOV

Nonsense.

LUDWIG

Of course, it's nonsense! How is it you don't understand it, Toropetz? He portrays the moment when her passion is yet hidden—it is only quivering in her eyelids—but in an instant and—sin is in this line of the shoulders, in these wavy lines of breast—

ALEXEY

Whom are you discussing? Katerina? What strange art!

KOROMISLOV

We are discussing Salome, Alexey. Where is Liza?

TOROPETZ

[*Angrily*]: We are not discussing Katerina Ivanovna! As for the shoulders and the breast,—any model will give me that—but you give me the eyes! I have seen them—they are wonderful!

KOROMISLOV

You are talking nonsense, Toropetz.

[*Listening to the discussion, he goes to look for LIZA.*

The argument between the artists continues.

ALEXEY, *shrugging his shoulders, walks off to the table.*]

TEPLOVSKY

Your plate is empty, Salome,—may I put my head upon it?

KATERINA

Do you want to lose it?

TEPLOVSKY

I want to be your prophet.

MENTIKOV

Ha, ha, ha! Well said! [*Sings.*] "Thus my young life passes without leaving a trace—" Eh, you prophets, let us have another drink!

ALEXEY

Katya! Will George be here soon?
[KOROMISLOV *sits down near LIZA.*]

KOROMISLOV

Why did you sit down here in the dark, Lizochka?
It is dull here.

LIZA

No.

KOROMISLOV

It's true, it's more restful for your eyes here. Did you hear what nonsense Toropetz was prating? We artists are a peculiar set!

LIZA

Yes.

KOROMISLOV

Liza— [*takes her by the hand.*]

LIZA

No, don't. Paul, is it true that Mentikov is—Katya's lover? Accidentally—I saw—how he kissed Katya today—on the stairway.

KOROMISLOV

Yes? Liza, my dear little girl—

LIZA

[*Moving away from him on the couch*]: Leave me alone, do you hear? Please, go away! Aren't you ashamed of yourself—to talk to me with such familiarity. Go away, please.

[*KOROMISLOV stands a while perplexed. Shrugging his shoulders, he goes out slowly.*]

MENTIKOV

That was well said. I love you all so much this evening that I am ready to have another with each and every one of you for your health! [*Looks around.*] Zhura, do you want a drink?

TOROPETZ

If you love me, fill my glass— Where is the ham?
[*Pulls a long piece of ham at the end of his fork.*]

KOROMISLOV

Are you having a good time, Toropetz? You'd better tell us how you ate oysters in Italy. [*To KATERINA.*] Well, my dear, do you feel rested? Come back to the scaffold.

ALEXEY

[*Laughing*]: To the scaffold? What strange art—and what strange conversations, Paul! Katya, don't forget that I must have a talk with you.

KATERINA

Very well. I'll remember.

KOROMISLOV

[*Morosely*]: Alexey, you'd better go back to your furnished rooms.

ALEXEY

Are you chasing me, Paul?

KOROMISLOV

I am not chasing even Mentikov, so I surely would not chase a noble youth like you. It is simply my paternal solicitude for your welfare. Come, Katerina Ivanovna.

[*The two artists and MENTIKOV laugh.* KATERINA as-

sumes her former pose, TEPLOVSKY plays a few bars. Several minutes of comparative quiet.]

LUDWIG

Mentikov, they say you have tickets for the Parliament?—

MENTIKOV

As many as you want. Will you give me a sketch? I don't give tickets away for nothing.

TOROPETZ

Give him a sketch—he'll steal it anyway.

ALEXEY

[*Seriously*]: Why don't you give him a thrashing?

TOROPETZ

Him? We haven't tried yet, but we really must.

MENTIKOV

[*Rising*]: And that is the reward for my love of art. Oh, men, men, how mean you are! [*He sings* "Thus my young life passes without any trace." *He goes to LIZA in the dark corner.*]

TEPLOVSKY

Katerina Ivanovna! let us have a jolly time to-

night! Let us go in an automobile to the islands—remember, you promised me? I'll not leave you alone.

KOROMISLOV

Don't disturb her, you hideous tempter! You'd better play something on the piano. I see you are envious, well then, show yourself in all your glory—
[MENTIKOV *sits down near LIZA.*]

MENTIKOV

Dreaming? "Dreams, dreams, where is your sweetness." Eh, Liza Ivanovna! You are an angel of purity and innocence, and you cannot understand what it is that drives us lonely and homeless men to alcohol. I am absolutely alone—or as the demon says,—“Again alone!” Eh, Liza Ivanovna! Lizochka.

LIZA

Don't you dare talk to me like this.

MENTIKOV

[*Arrogantly*]: Why not? Why do you allow Paul to talk to you like this? Strange Lizochka.

LIZA

[*Rising*]: I am going to tell Alexey about this at once.

MENTIKOV

[*Frightened*]: Please, please, don't, I won't do it again. I was only jesting. Everybody thinks I am gloomy—but I am funny! Lizochka—pardon me, Liza Ivanovna—well, may I kiss your hand? Only one little finger—one tiny, innocent finger!—I am only jesting—how foolish it is!

[*He says the last words to himself, as LIZA had walked away. MENTIKOV remained seated a little longer at the curtain in the corner, listening. Then he comes out unnoticed, and walks over to the table.*]

KOROMISLOV

Ah, Liza. Alexey, you had better give her some food, or the young lady will be famished. Zhura, my dear boy, ask Masha for more plates.

LIZA

Is your name Zhura? Thank you, Alexey, I don't feel like eating.

ZHURA

Uncle calls me so. I am from the country.

TEPLOVSKY

[*At the piano*]: Look out, he will also be a celebrity. Paul, I am beginning to feel bored.

KOROMISLOV

Wait.

TEPLOVSKY

Are you fond of music, Liza Ivanovna?

LIZA

Not particularly.

TEPLOVSKY

Paul, I am losing patience! I'm going. Just think of it!—he invited us here—he arranged things nicely for himself, while his guests are bored to death. What would you call this, Toropetz?

TOROPETZ

I don't feel bored!

KOROMISLOV

And my Salome has also bent down her head. Are you tired, Katerina Ivanovna?

[KATERINA lets the vessel slip out of her hands, and it falls noisily. KATERINA remains motionless. Pause. All are somewhat perplexed.]

TEPLOVSKY

What is it?

KOROMISLOV

[*Loudly*]: Eh, what is it? You mustn't do that—I shall be Herod and demand—Salome, I beg you! The dance of the seven veils!

TEPLOVSKY

That's an idea! Bravo, bravo! The dance!

MENTIKOV

I demand it! Bravo, bravo! That's an idea!

LIZA

Don't, Katya!

TOROPETZ

[*Angrily*]: Why not? She should dance!

TEPLOVSKY

I don't know what to play— Very well, that'll do.
[*Improvises, stopping and starting again; finally hits on the right tune. KATERINA hesitates, casting vague coquettish glances.*]

MENTIKOV

We are waiting, Katerina Ivanovna! Make us mortals happy!

ALEXEY

[*In a low voice*]: If I hear your voice again, I'll fling you out of that window!

MENTIKOV

[*In a low voice*]: Why do you say that to me? I am not the only one—they are all shouting.

ALEXEY

You heard what I said?

[MENTIKOV walks away quickly. KATERINA, looking questioningly and coquettishly as before, comes to the centre, and pauses irresolutely. Dances. At one moment it seems as if she would start to cry. KOROSMISLOV exclaims, "Bravo, Bravo!" He holds a glass of wine and watches her. KATERINA exclaims strangely, helplessly and wildly waving her hands, and then assumes the pose of shameless defiance. Her lips are somewhat curled into an angry smile, her eyes look arrogantly and with contempt. An awkward pause. During the dance GEORGE enters, unnoticed, stopping at the threshold.]

TOROPETZ

[*Without looking at her, softly and confusedly*]: What is this! What sort of a dance is this?

KOROMISLOV

Bravo, Katerina Ivanovna!

[KATERINA IVANOVNA, *without answering, goes to the table with firm steps.*]

GEORGE

[*Softly*]: Bravo, bravo!

KOROMISLOV

Ah, George, why so late? Did you see it? It wasn't bad.

GEORGE

I've seen it. Good evening.

[*Greets those present. TOROPETZ, greeting GEORGE, rises and drops his napkin.*]

You're in your glory, Teplovsky? Ah, you are here too, Alexey? I haven't seen you for a long time, you come to us so rarely— Are you busy? Who else is here?—Liza, Katya—I have seen them today— [*Laughs.*] Oh, I am so tired—for five hours we talked and talked!—

TOROPETZ

The committee?

GEORGE

Two committees.

KOROMISLOV

Help yourself— Give him a plate, Zhura— Well, how is everybody?

GEORGE

Whom do you mean?

KOROMISLOV

The children, of course.

GEORGE

Ah, the children! Thank you, they are well. And how is your portrait getting on? If you have to go on with your work, go ahead—I won't disturb you.

KOROMISLOV

Let her rest. Katerina Ivanovna, you better walk around a little—your feet must be numb.

KATERINA

Very well. [*Goes away from the table. To ALEXEY.*] Alexey, come over here.

TEPLOVSKY

Will you have some wine, George?

GEORGE

Please.

MENTIKOV

[*Modestly*]: George Dmitrievitch, do you know how much I drank this evening? Eight glasses.

GEORGE

Yes? Lizochka, I was at home just now—the children are sleeping.

LIZA

Are you tired, Gorya?

GEORGE

Never mind, my dear, it doesn't matter.

TOROPETZ

According to my opinion, pardon me, all, this work of yours is of no use—

[*They argue. KATERINA leads ALEXEY to the dark corner.*]

KATERINA

Let us sit down, Alexey. I am tired.

ALEXEY

I must have a talk with you.

KATERINA

George is here, have you seen him? Oh, yes, of course you've seen him. Did you like the way I danced?

ALEXEY

No. I must have a talk with you. Why did you come to my house again today? I told them not to admit you. What does it mean, Katerina Ivanovna?

KATERINA

I love you.

ALEXEY

You smell of wine! How horrible!

KATERINA

Save me. I love you. What are they doing with me? Did you see how I danced this evening, and George said, "Bravo!" Do you think I love you? I hate you. I'll bite you.

ALEXEY

Leave my hands alone.

KATERINA

You are afraid of the sin, because George is your brother? I want to kiss you—give me your lips! You are my prophet, you are my conscience— Why do

your hands tremble so? Look at my breast— Are you pleased that I put your hand on my breast?

ALEXEY

[In a whisper]: Leave me.

KATERINA

Kiss me. No one sees us.

ALEXEY

Leave me!

KATERINA

No one will know. Tonight?

ALEXEY

[Quite loud]: Go!

[Pushes her away with such force that she falls on the couch. She lies there, motionless, and looks up at ALEXEY with a peculiar smile. He raises his hands as if he were lifting a heavy rock in order to throw it at the woman.]

ALEXEY

You—

[KATERINA, without blinking, looks at his face and continues to smile strangely. Finding no words,

ALEXEY in despair clasps his head and walks away quickly. Without looking around, he goes to the door, stooping. *Exit.*]

KOROMISLOV

Where is he going? Alexey! Are you going home?

LIZA

Wait, Alexey.

KOROMISLOV

[*Holding her by the hand, to GEORGE*]: Your brother acts strangely tonight. Do you know what is wrong with him?

TEPLOVSKY

He's a very nervous young man.

[*After ALEXEY's departure, KATERINA remains awhile in the same pose, then she rises, adjusts herself, and comes out slowly. Awkward pause.*]

KATERINA

[*Without sitting down at the table*]: Give me some wine, Teplovsky. Gorya, Alexey asked me to tell you that he is coming to see you tomorrow— He wants to talk things over with you.

GEORGE

What is it about?

KATERINA

I don't know. He had a headache.

TEPLOVSKY

[*Handing her a glass of wine*]: Here's to our automobile ride, Katerina Ivanovna!

KATERINA

[*Drinking*]: And what else!

TEPLOVSKY

[*Insinuating*]: And what else?

KATERINA

[*Indifferently*]: You know it yourself. Gorya, will you allow me to go out for an automobile ride? You are kind, you are wise, you will allow me—

GEORGE

If you are so anxious—

TEPLOVSKY

Hurrah! He gives his permission, he gives his permission.

KATERINA

[*Strokes GEORGE tenderly on the head*]: Toropetz, did you see what a good husband I have? Why don't you paint him? He is so good, so kind—so kind—

KOROMISLOV

The husband has given his permission, but meanwhile I don't give mine. The power of art is stronger than the power of the law— Mentikov, I make you a present of this aphorism instead of two sketches. What does it mean? she danced and danced—and now it's all wasted. Give me your hand, my dear!

[Takes her by the hand and leads her to the platform.]

TEPLOVSKY

[Shrugging his shoulders]: This is unbearable. Have you any cigars, Mentikov?

MENTIKOV

Alas, no! Teplovsky, do you want to go out in an automobile? I can telephone—I have friends who—

TEPLOVSKY

Thank you. I also have friends. Well, let me have a cigarette— You have good cigarettes, haven't you?

KOROMISLOV

George, come closer—you haven't seen it yet. Well, how do you like it?

GEORGE

[Looks at the portrait]: An interesting conception. What sort of a vessel is that in her hands—is that a Cymbal?

TOROPETZ

[*From afar*]: A tray.

KOROMISLOV

Just listen to him.

GEORGE

Yes. [*Laughing, returns to the table.*] Is that my wine?

MENTIKOV

[*Continuing*]: Liza Ivanovna is very gloomy this evening, she doesn't like our feast. And yet what is there in life if we leave out all amusements. But she does not want to understand it.

LIZA

You are drunk.

MENTIKOV

I am drunk, what of it? I am a modest man, but I have my own requirements—to drink a glass of wine in good company— Here's to your health, George Dmitrievitch, and to all those who do not grin—

LIZA

Gorya, tell him—

GEORGE

[*Softly*]: It seems you have, indeed, been drinking too much—

MENTIKOV

[*Tearfully*]: You are my friend, you are like an older brother to me, and I submit to your decision, but what right has she? Who is she, I'd like to know, pardon my audacity—

KATERINA

[*Suddenly*]: I don't want to hold an empty vessel. What is it, what did you give me?

TEPLOVSKY

[*Laughs*]: Correct!

KATERINA

For two hours, I have been holding an empty dish. What for? That's stupid, I don't want it. Give me the head of the prophet, I want the head of the prophet!

KOROMISLOV

I'll order it for the next sitting. Wait, wait there!

KATERINA

I don't want to wait. Give me the head of the prophet or—[*she flings the vessel far away, it falls to*

the floor with a bang.] There. You wanted me to be Salome, but there is no prophet here—that's impudence! They are all such insignificant people, crabs—

KOROMISLOV

[Putting the brushes away]: Herods.

KATERINA

Silence! *[Turning pale.]* You have no right to talk this way to a woman. If I consented to pose for you, it does not mean that you have the right—

GEORGE

Katya, he is jesting.

LIZA

Katya!

MENTIKOV

[Angrily]: The prophet is gone. Such prophets need the water cure!

KATERINA

[Descending from the platform]: Silence! I am an honest woman and I will not permit— Pour out some wine for me, I say!

GEORGE

Don't, Katya! Let us go home.

KATERINA

And I say, give me wine! Whose glass is this?—it is immaterial to me. [*Drinks.*] Who says Alexey is a prophet? [*Drinks.*] Alexey is an insignificant boob, and if I want to, I can make him crawl on the ground like a dog. Lizoschka, see how funny and stupid they all are—look! [*Pointing at TEPLOVSKY.*] He wants that I should—but not on your life. I am a queen here, and you are all my slaves—and you all want the same thing—and you—and you, and you—Who is this boy?

KOROMISLOV

Go to your room, Zhura.

KATERINA

No! Come over to me. [*Kisses him.*] You are a nice little boy—you came from the country? LIZA, see what a nice little boy—he came from the country. Kiss him.

KOROMISLOV

Go, Zhura, go!

KATERINA

No. Kiss him.

TEPLOVSKY

You'd better kiss me—I am also a boy from the country.

KATERINA

[*Rising*]: Silence! You are again saying nasty things!

GEORGE

He is only jesting.

MENTIKOV

Of course, he is jesting.

KATERINA

How does he dare say that I should kiss him? I am an honest woman and— You know, he fired three times at me and wanted to kill me, but I am a honest woman, I was never untrue to him. I was so frightened when he took out the revolver— Oh Lord, I thought, is it possible that he wants to kill me? Pour out more wine for me!

[GEORGE *walks away, shaking his head, roams about the studio.*]

KOROMISLOV

What is the use of recalling the past, Katerina

Ivanovna? Don't drink any more wine—I'll help you put on your coat—and let us go home— We'll leave George here, let the husbands stay—we'll take Liza along—

KATERINA

No. I am going with him for a ride in an automobile. You think I am drunk—what nonsense! Artist, do you like me?

TOROPETZ

No.

KATERINA

You lie. You do like me. And you, artist? You are so stern and I am afraid of you—

TEPLOVSKY

I like you!

GEORGE

Paul, take her away! I can't—I—

KOROMISLOV

I'll take her away! What's wrong, just think of it! The lady has had a little too much to drink—such things happen with us every day. But has that often happened with her?

GEORGE

It's the first time I have seen her this way. Paul, I am losing my reason!

KOROMISLOV

Never mind, you'll not lose it. You'd better look after Liza—I am sorry for her!

KATERINA

Are you serious, do you really love? Oh, I don't believe in love now.

TEPLOVSKY

I don't believe in love any more myself.

KATERINA

Seriously speaking—I wanted to throw myself out of that window. Don't you believe it? How foolish! And I am telling you that I was about to do it and I even said my prayers— But no—I lost my courage! I lost my nerve! Lizochka, look, I am almost naked— How is that?

LIZA

You were—posing.

KATERINA

Oh, yes, I had forgotten all about it. I was wondering—I am almost naked—with all these men around

me. I am tired, Lizochka, I am dreadfully tired—see how heavy my head is. Oh, I am so exhausted—

LIZA

Let us go home, Katya.

KATERINA

No. Where is the prophet? What are you laughing at? Where is the prophet?

TEPLOVSKY

[*To GEORGE*]: Let me manage it! George, I know how to handle them. We'll drive for an hour in the cold and she'll sober up.

KOROMISLOV

Let him! But take an open automobile.

TEPLOVSKY

Of course. You are tired, Gorya, you've worked too hard? I will come to you to-morrow for dinner. I live in furnished rooms, alone like the devil, and one longs sometimes for domestic life, for a fire-side—Brace up, Gorya!

MENTIKOV

That's well said. Bravo, Katerina Ivanovna! No, no, gentlemen, that does not refer to me—I am not

aspiring to be a prophet. I have my own requirements, but I am a modest man and—

TEPLOVSKY

Let us go, Katerina Ivanovna.

KATERINA

Where?

TEPLOVSKY

Just as you ordered—the car is waiting. Let us go, the weather is fine and we will have a wonderful—

LIZA

I am coming along with you, Katya.

KATERINA

You? No, my dear, you mustn't go. We are going on a spree—he thinks we are going home. But I don't want to go home.

TEPLOVSKY

Very well, then. [*Winks to GEORGE.*] We are going on a spree. Come on.

KATERINA

You see, Lizochka, we are going on a spree! Come,

let me give you my blessing—be wise, my good sister, may God grant you—

[*Makes the sign of the cross over LIZA who is weeping.*]

Go to the nursery, and kiss my children— What are you crying about, you foolish little girl?

GEORGE

Let us go home, Katya!

MENTIKOV

Of course, home. Katerina Ivanovna, I beg you, let us go home! What is this? We came together—

KOROMISLOV

Come over here, Mentikov! Just a moment—

GEORGE

For God's sake, Katya!

KATERINA

What nonsense! [*Rising.*] Oh, my head is reeling—Where is the automobile?

[*Walks several steps and sinks into an armchair.*]

No, I can't go there. Gorya, let me have my coat—I want you to help me put it on—also my rubbers—

[*Exit GEORGE. MENTIKOV stands aside, disappointed.*]

KOROMISLOV

Won't you feel cold, my dear? Teplovsky, look out, see that she doesn't catch cold. Take a shawl along.

TEPLOVSKY

There, he is teaching the masters! [*Impatiently.*] What takes him so long? I'll have to go there myself. Ah!

[*The maid and GEORGE bring in KATERINA's dress; GEORGE dresses his wife, kneeling, he puts on her rubbers. All gather around them; only MENTIKOV stands aside; and LIZA, covering her face, is weeping on the couch, in the distance.*]

TOROPETZ

Well, we are also going. Good night.

KATERINA

[*Kissing her husband on the head*]: My dear, I am so happy that you are dressing me! You are also tired? My poor boy! Take care of yourself, don't catch cold— All right?

GEORGE

[*Kissing her hand and rising*]: All right.

TEPLOVSKY

Ready? Let us go. Allow me, I'll take your arm,

Katerina Ivanovna, this way. In the daytime it isn't proper, but now—

[*All bid GEORGE Good night—he bows low.*]

KOROMISLOV

I'll escort you. Masha, you go first and light the way—

[*There is a brief pause in the doorway; KATERINA turns around and calls.*]

KATERINA

Gorya! Come here, Gorya. . . . My darling, I want to bless you!

KOROMISLOV

What is this religious mood? That's enough!

KATERINA

[*Sternly*]: Don't laugh, I am serious. Well, good-by, my dearest. May God be with you.

KOROMISLOV

At last! I'll be back in a moment, George!

[*All go out. Only GEORGE, LIZA and MENTIKOV remain in the studio. LIZA is crying. MENTIKOV, turning around in the room, walks over to GEORGE and sits down cautiously near him on the couch. Silence. MENTIKOV sighs.*]

Our Katerina Ivanovna has gone away. [*Pause, a sigh.*] Will you have a cigarette, George Dmitrievitch? [GEORGE *looks at him a while indefinitely, then takes a cigarette.* LIZA *is crying.*]

CURTAIN

